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Editors
FREDA KIRCHWEY MAX LERNER
Literary Editor *Associate Editor*
MARGARET MARSHALL MAXWELL S. STEWART
Dramatic Critic
JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

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Publisher
FREDA KIRCHWEY

Hugo Van Arx, Business Manager. Walter F. Grueninger, Circulation Manager. Muriel C. Gray, Advertising Manager.

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The Shape of Things

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THE STOCK-MARKET CRASH HAS CROWDED most other topics out of discussion, if not out of the news. If it is compared with the 1929 crash, a sharp difference is to be found in the fact that the current market is of far smaller proportions and is a good deal less a speculators' market. While we cannot share the optimism that insists there is no connection between the stock break and actual business conditions, it is true that the effect of the market slump on business and employment will be less marked than in 1929. In general one may consider the present situation as one of a series of business recessions, accompanied by a panic recession in the stock market. All eyes will now be fixed on government moves in the field of money and taxation. The President's budget message, with its increased estimate of the deficit for the coming year, marked the death knell of the RFC and PWA; and Mr. Roosevelt was quick to follow it with a disclaimer of any intention to impose new taxes. There are clear indications that the new tax bill which the Treasury will introduce in January will represent a sort of standstill agreement with the business community, containing no new taxes or increases but offering minor downward revisions of both the capital-gains tax and the tax on undistributed corporate dividends in the interest of easing the burden on some businesses. We believe that the move toward cutting down essential federal expenditures in the social services is clearly a mistake. While we question certain details of Senator La Follette's tax program, his insistence on balancing the budget through increased tax rates—especially the surtaxes on incomes under $50,000—deserves vigorous support.

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THE DANGER OF ANOTHER HOARE-LAVAL settlement growing out of the Brussels conference is greatly enhanced by the apparent inability of either the United States or Great Britain to formulate a definite plan for checking Japanese aggression. While it is natural that no statement of policy should be issued in advance of the conference, there are clear indications that no positive steps are planned by either delegation. All statements from Washington regarding the parley have emphasized mediation as the first task before the conference and have spoken vaguely of "peaceful means to hasten the end of the conflict." In London Mr. Chamberlain has been even more specific in declaring that "it is a mistake going to

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the conference talking about economic sanctions, economic pressure, and force." That Tokyo would look with favor on an armistice based on the status quo goes without saying. While China has officially declared that it will not talk peace as long as enemy troops remain on its soil, there is more than a possibility that the fascist clique at Nanking might be strong enough to put over a deal if it were aided by pressure from the powers. Fortunately, the recent Chinese victories in Shansi and Shantung have practically eliminated this threat for the moment. But it must be recognized that the only peace that can be achieved on the basis of the present military situation would be a settlement on Japanese terms.

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THAT THE BOYCOTT AGAINST JAPANESE goods has obtained greater popular support than is generally realized is indicated by the latest poll conducted by the American Institute of Public Opinion. In a vote taken some ten days ago, before boycott sentiment had had an opportunity to crystallize, 37 per cent of the persons approached replied yes to the question "Is your sympathy with China great enough to keep you from buying goods made in Japan?" Strong boycott sentiment was found in every section of the country and was equally apparent among Democratic and Republican voters. It was strongest in the Pacific Coast states and with persons possessing better-than-average incomes. As might be expected, there was a large number of persons who indicated a sympathy for China but did not show a willingness to boycott. If we are to accept the results of the poll, three Americans out of five are definitely sympathetic with China, of whom two-thirds favor the boycott. Only 1 per cent of the persons approached indicated sympathy with Japan. Especially striking is the fact that 76 per cent of the persons of better-than-average income favor China, and that the least sympathy is expressed by those who are overwhelmed by troubles of their own—voters on relief.

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THE C. I. O.–A. F. of L. PEACE CONFERENCE begins its meetings as we go to press. It does not assemble with complete serenity—but then, no peace conference has ever been really peaceful. The principal obstacles have nothing to do with the personal bitterness of Lewis and Green but with the fact that the constituent unions in each organization have by this time made so hard a fight for supremacy in their field that they will cling to their gains with a tenacity that would have been impossible two years ago. The maritime union, the electrical workers' unions, and the telegraphers' unions are cases in point. There is the added fact that neither group fully trusts the other, and that even an agreement on principle would strike all sorts of snags in the working out of practical plans for living up to the principle—and in a state of tension any snag might prove fatal. Nevertheless, a real will for peace is to be found in crucial quarters: in Administration circles, which recognize that neither the National Labor Relations Board nor the state labor boards can survive when caught in the crossfire between the rival organizations, and which fear the political effects of labor division in the coming Congressional elections; among the more moderate leaders on both sides, such as Hillman, Harrison, and Dubinsky; and most of all among the labor rank and file. The central labor bodies of Kenosha and Sheboygan, Wisconsin, for example, have just started a movement to gather a million labor signatures for a petition demanding an end of the labor civil war. Present indications are that William Green, caught napping by the peace proposal, is not making things any too easy for the conference, but Green must reckon with the demand for peace among his own members. To our mind only two basic conditions of peace exist. The first is that neither industrial unionism nor craft unionism be scrapped, but each allowed to develop—autonomously if no other way can be found—within the enlarged federation. The second is that there be no attempt to take the new membership which each group has obtained and partition it among the units of the other group.

*

THE APPOINTMENT OF NATHAN STRAUS AS Federal Housing Administrator marks, we hope, a new era for public housing in the United States. Coming from membership in the New York City Authority, Mr. Straus brings to his task an inside knowledge of the local officials' point of view, neglect of which has seriously hampered the housing movement in the past. He has also himself built and managed an outstanding housing development—the Hillside limited-dividend project in New York. He has shown he can get things done—another quality the lack of which has plagued our public housing. Against the advice of most American experts the Federal Housing Administration has been made part of the Department of the Interior—"under the general supervision of the authority thereof," as the law reads—instead of being given a life of its own. Mr. Straus's first task will be to assert and establish for the administration the greatest independence he can.

*

FORTY-ONE PERSONS HAVE DIED FROM THE effects of a new medicine; and as we go to press the federal Food and Drug Administration is scouring the country to find the last of some 700 pint bottles of Massengill's elixir sulfanilamide that obviously should never have been distributed. Yet the scandalous fact is that the Food and Drug Administration was able to take action in this case only because the medicine was misbranded, not because it contained a dangerous drug. This particular product became liable to seizure because it was erroneously called an elixir; but the administration remains powerless to regulate other brands of sulfanilamide. Mention of the trade name of the medicine has not been made in the newspaper accounts we have seen, although this would seem the best way of stopping the distribution of the drug. The press releases of the Food and Drug Administration also refrain from naming it, but this was done, we are informed, because of actual doubt at the time as to what products were involved. The facts are now available. The fatal "elixir" is manufactured by the S. E. Massengill Company of Bristol, Tennessee. It is in-

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teresting to recall that it was the Tennessee medicine makers who did so much to hold up passage of the food-and-drug bill, even in its emasculated form. The medicine in question is no specific for gonorrhea, but has been widely used as such; this means that it is being bought and consumed secretly in unknown amounts. Although the drug is valuable as a treatment for various infections under proper safeguards, the medical journals have warned the public against using any preparation of sulfanilamide without first consulting a physician. Yet Dr. Fishbein has said that he knows of no law restricting its sale over the counter. This is surely one of the most disgraceful as well as one of the most tragic incidents in the history of medicine for profit and the attempt of a modern government to regulate it.

*

GHETTO BENCHES IN THE CLASSROOM ARE among the most refined tortures that fascists can inflict on young Jews. Official sanction was given early in October to an order segregating Jewish students in the University of Warsaw in "yellow-patch benches." The Jewish community in Poland, which has learned from German experience that to accede to such a policy must end fatally, has met this move with a sharp and militant show of strength. With the aid of liberal and labor groups 1,500 Jewish students went on a forty-eight-hour strike at Warsaw, barricading themselves in their student house and picketing the colleges. It is significant that in Lwow and Wilno, Ukrainian and White Russian students joined Jewish students in sympathy strikes. On October 19 several thousand Christian workers joined 3,000,000 Polish Jews in a half-day general strike which resulted in the complete shutdown of all Jewish shops, factories, and offices. The ghetto-bench measures have an importance extending beyond the universities. The nationalist press has just launched a campaign for the extension of the ghetto system to the professions and the markets, and for the exclusion of Jews from the army. Anti-Semitism in Poland is chiefly the product of fascist students and intellectuals, working with government connivance. Whether the forces of Polish democracy, potentially a majority, will have the strength to rouse themselves and unite against the groups that are leading Poland to a Nazi doom is by no means certain. The creation last week of a Labor Party, with the blessings of Paderewski, may be a straw in the wind; but it must be noted that "labor" is a misnomer in this instance and that the party is actually democratic-nationalist, pro-French and anti-German, and mildly anti-Semitic.

*

WE HAVE RECEIVED A COPY OF A LETTER addressed to the Association of University Professors in which Bishop Francis J. McConnell, president of the American Association for Social Security, asks for an investigation of a new, and to our minds a disturbing, form of interference with academic freedom. The facts are these. Abraham Epstein, secretary of the Association for Social Security, recently opened a course on social insurance at New York University. The morning after his first lecture the university received a call from an employee in the office of Anna Rosenberg, regional director of the Social Security Board, who said that Mr. Epstein's point of view was not the official one and that some person representing the government's position should supplement Mr. Epstein's views. Although this move apparently was not ordered from Washington, the federal chairman of the Social Security Board, A. T. Altmayer, wrote Mr. Epstein that he could not see any objection to Miss Rosenberg's suggestion. "Certainly," he said, "we should all agree that the problems arising under the Social Security Act are complex enough to warrant consideration by persons with different points of view." This obviously begs the question. The issue is not whether only one point of view is to be presented; it is whether the government is justified in forcing presentation of the official position every time a private person teaches a conflicting doctrine. Such pressure is no less dangerous because it is subtle and superficially reasonable. We put this particular episode down to misdirected zeal; but the zeal of the bureaucrat is a near relative of tyranny.

*

FELIX WARBURG WAS THE SORT OF RICH MAN whose chief meaning for the world lay not in the way he made money but the way he spent it. Head of the banking house of Kuhn, Loeb and Company, he had practically retired from the active management of it to devote his energy and his wealth to community-welfare activities and to the far-flung destiny of the Jews in Poland, Germany, Palestine, Rumania, and South America. The gifts he brought to his task were a quiet integrity and an immense tact and prestige. He was in the best sense a patriarch of his people, but one whose interest recognized no national or religious boundaries.

Mussolini Wins a Round

THE struggle over the volunteers in Spain appears to have resulted in another victory for the fascist powers. Talk of opening the French frontier and occupying the island of Minorca has ceased abruptly. Nor does there seem to be the smallest possibility that any Italian and German troops will be withdrawn before the end of the fighting season, if at all. Nominally, Mussolini made an important concession when he agreed to permit a neutral commission to go to Spain to undertake a census of the "volunteers" and make arrangements for their withdrawal. But having gained a breathing-spell by these tactics, he rendered the concession meaningless by refusing to bind himself to accept the commission's findings. Thus negotiations are back where they were a week or even a month ago, and the fascists have succeeded in gaining a vital delay in which to prepare for a new attack on Madrid with fresh Italian troops. Already the delay has borne fruit in the fall of Gijon. If the French frontier had been opened in September as was suggested in the League resolution, Gijon and the Asturias would

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still be in government hands. As it is, the fall of Gijon has undoubtedly strengthened Franco's bargaining power, stiffened the diplomatic resistance of Italy and Germany, and induced further caution on the part of the democratic powers.

Perhaps the most brilliant aspect of Mussolini's strategy is the way in which he has succeeded in placing responsibility for the failure of the withdrawal program on the Soviet Union. Because the Soviets are unwilling to accept a plan which is obviously unfair to the Spanish government and contrary to the spirit of the League resolution, they are being denounced as obstructionists and threatened with isolation, leaving the two countries which have consistently sabotaged non-intervention apparently free of blame.

Hitler has played his role as skilfully as Mussolini. Without the bluster and threats which usually characterize Nazi diplomacy Germany has managed to support Italy on every point before the Non-Intervention Committee. The Nazis were also quick to take advantage of the powers' preoccupation in Spain to launch a vicious campaign of propaganda against Czecho-Slovakia and to take the final step in "coordinating" Danzig. Under ordinary circumstances either event would have resulted in a protest from the League powers. But the most that has been forthcoming has been a semi-official reminder by France of the existence of the Franco-Czech mutual-assistance pact.

No logical explanation exists for England's and France's newest capitulation at London. The democratic countries had the upper hand as far as bargaining power was concerned. Opening of the French frontier coupled with active economic support for the Spanish government would have so strengthened the Loyalists that Italy and Germany would have had no choice but to withdraw as gracefully as possible. And the continuing threat to Britain and France in the Mediterranean, to say nothing of the threat to Europe as a whole, would have been largely liquidated. Yet when it came to a showdown, the democracies again allowed themselves to be taken off their guard by imaginary fascist concessions. There is nothing in the dispatches which adequately explains the surrender. Speculations are numerous and contradictory. Was there a deal whereby France and Britain were assured that their interests in Spain and the Mediterranean would be safeguarded? Or is there some inherent defect in democracy which prevents its statesmen from holding their own against the apparent recklessness of fascist diplomacy? Even if there were a behind-the-scenes agreement with Mussolini about the Mediterranean and the Balearic Islands, it is difficult to see what assurance Britain could have had that the promises would be kept. Italian soldiers are still in control of Majorca, and contingents have recently been landed in Spanish Morocco. Louis Fischer on another page of this issue reports that Italian troops continue to arrive in Spain. No man can be counted on to be more zealous than Mussolini in obtaining the full measure of advantage from his victory, or to be less scrupulous in observing his word. Throughout the dismal history of non-intervention no pledge has been honored by the fascist powers when it has been to their advantage to repudiate it.

Thus, deal or no deal, it is evident that democratic statesmanship has been far from astute. While it might seem unfair to attribute this weakness to democracy itself, it cannot be denied that the strong pacifist sentiment which exists within all the democracies makes it difficult for statesmen to call the fascists' bluff even though the hope of peace rests in such actions. When we consider also the powerful groups within the democracies which because of economic or class interests are sympathetic with the fascist aspirations, the limitations of democratic statesmanship are the more understandable. But although weakness can be explained it cannot be justified. The very existence of democracy depends on bridging these conflicting interests with a system of law and a concept of justice which will be respected.

The City or the Tiger?

AFTER weeks of campaigning, the issue in the New York City elections remains fundamentally the same: the voters will have to choose between an able and efficient municipal administration and the corruption of Tammany; between the city and the Tiger. LaGuardia has been helped rather than hindered by the curious crossing of party lines, in which he finds himself running on both a Republican and a Labor Party platform, with team-mates and support representing the extremes of economic viewpoint. He has shown how logically consistent this variegated support is with the single issue of good government. He has insisted on making the issue Tammany, while Mahoney, his Democratic opponent, has sought to make it communism. Mahoney's managers have sedulously refrained from using as speakers the more malodorous Tammany people, much to their pain, and have labored at the thankless task of convicting the LaGuardia-Seabury-Dewey triumvirate of bolshevism and godlessness. Mahoney's military objective has been to drive the anti-Communist, religious wedge into the LaGuardia support, and split off the Irish-Catholic labor vote which traditionally has been Tammany's but has now shifted.

It is almost certain that he will not be successful. The LaGuardia ticket has gained much strength by the addition of the racket-buster Thomas E. Dewey. In addition, it has the united support of the newspapers—with the exception of the Hearst press and the Tory *Sun*—and of such mass-circulation mediums as the *Saturday Evening Post* and the March of Time. The straw votes and the heavy betting odds indicate one of the biggest sweeps in New York's history.

This turn in the fortunes of the campaign makes it valid to discuss some of the more important stakes and consequences of the election. Within the good-government issue there are wheels within wheels of state and national politics and policy. The Republicans' support of LaGuardia is not wholly disinterested. By hitching their

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wagon to his star they will for the first time get their candidates into the minor offices; above all, they are aiming to capture a majority in the crucial state constitutional convention. Neither is Jim Farley's support of Mahoney disinterested. Farley wants to build a state machine for himself, and he can do it only through a Farleyized Tammany, the spearpoint of which was the defeat of Copeland by Mahoney in the primaries. But the person whose future is really interesting is LaGuardia himself. He has already been boomed for President in significant quarters—by William Allen White and by General Hugh Johnson. Jay Franklin, in his astute biography of the Mayor, sees him primarily in national terms. His American Western background combined with roots in the new immigration is by no means a political handicap; and the skill he has thus far shown in riding the tides of political life is nothing short of uncanny.

It is when we consider LaGuardia's record as a New Dealer even before Roosevelt became one that we approach the real meaning of the election. It has been an unhappy fact that the national New Deal, under Democratic leadership, has never extended to the big city governments. This is partly because the reform energy has exhausted itself nationally, but principally because the Democrats have needed the city machines in order to win —the Tammany, Nash-Kelley, Pendergast, Curley machines. It is on this basis that Farley has sought to sell Mahoney to the President. New York is now the biggest test of the possibility of a New Deal in municipal government. It is not, as is generally said, a question of whether a reform city administration can succeed itself. It is a question of whether a reformed and socialized capitalism will succeed throughout American life or be isolated and finally starved out in Washington. That is the real issue between the city and the Tiger.

For that reason one of the most important features of the campaign is the fight over the City Council. Valid city government is not only a matter of dramatic personal careers like those of LaGuardia and Dewey: it must be built painfully, brick by brick, from the ground up. Because the revolt against Tammany has hitherto succeeded only around the dramatic figures, the new system of proportional representation adopted in New York for the election of members of the Council may prove of major importance. P. R. not only will enable the people to elect more Republican and Democratic anti-Tammanyites to the Council, but will also mean that Socialists, Communists, and Labor Party candidates, by the cumulative counting of the successive choices, will finally find their place in the city government. It is of the utmost importance for the voters to mark on their ballots an adequate number of candidates for the Council.

The Labor Party has wisely allied itself with LaGuardia and Dewey. It is not only supporting them but running its own candidates for the Council, and a candidate for the borough presidency of the Bronx. When we say "wisely" we do not mean that LaGuardia is the ideal representative of labor. As between Mahoney and LaGuardia, labor can have no choice but the latter; but even LaGuardia's labor record is by no means flawless. His support of George Harvey was, to our mind, such "slick" politics as to amount to a major political blunder. His support of Bruce Barton, Republican candidate for Congress against George Backer, the Labor Party candidate, was equally a blunder in view of Barton's enthusiasm for Mussolini's corporate state. But labor, taking its fledgling steps in politics, cannot afford perfectionism. What LaGuardia will do in the future is a matter of guesswork. Labor's support of him now must be viewed as an incident in its long-run bid for political effectiveness.

The Windsor Build-up

THE Duke of Windsor's new role of self-appointed ambassador and investigator to the Third Reich and the Unted States has aspects that are at once fantastic and sinister. If he was bored and wanted diversion, or if he felt neglected and wanted attention, we should be the last to grudge him the satisfaction of these entirely human desires. Perhaps the Duchess wants to be among her friends in Germany and America rather than clatter about in drafty Austrian castles or be stared at by Balkan peasants; or maybe she wants the Duke to settle down to the serious business of life—and what could be more serious than housing and the condition of the working classes? But if all this is true it still does not explain the fact that they have made the German trip as the personal guests of Hitler; it does not explain the official manner in which the German government has been allowed to manage and interpret the trip; it does not explain the deliberate and unnecessary Nazi salute by the Duke. It does not explain the significant fact that he was received not by his friend Ribbentrop or by Foreign Office officials or by the top men in the government, but by Robert Ley, the Führer of German labor.

The Duke is undoubtedly fuzzy-minded on social issues, but his fuzziness is the sort that can be turned to the uses of the fascist gospel. Here is a king whose heart bled publicly at the condition of the British workers; here is a king who lost his throne not only for love but presumably also for saying that "something must be done" about the labor problem. What could be cleverer than to connect a royal exile of such views with the Nazi method of "solving" the labor problem? This might have several effects. It might impress the Duke with German proletarian happiness as contrasted with the misery of the British workers in the derelict areas. It might show the German workers that British royalty has given the Nazi system its stamp of approval. And it might, above all, be intended to impress the British workers with Windsor's tender concern for them, thus far frustrated by an unfeeling ruling class.

That this is not wholly far-fetched will be clear to anyone who knows that the Duke and Duchess have had more than a fleeting charitable impulse toward Nazism. It is supported by an interesting column written by Dorothy Dunbar Bromley in the New York *World-Telegram*. According to Miss Bromley, the German visit was first

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planned while the Windsors were visiting Charles Bedaux in his Hungarian castle. Bedaux is an intimate not only of the Duke but also of Hitler; he is the originator of the infamous Bedaux speed-up system and an open supporter of fascism. Miss Bromley knows Bedaux and has talked with him about Windsor. When she says therefore that there is a plan afoot in the Duke's coterie of friends to build him up through publicity until the English people receive him back as a sort of "super-king," the information can only have come from Mr. Bedaux himself.

This fabulous story is borne out by a report in the New York *Daily News* that the French and British diplomatic intelligence services have investigated the Duke's "social-appeasement" movement and disclosed it as an "ingeniously conceived scheme" devised by Mr. Bedaux "for the international development of fascism," to be furthered by the royal junket to Germany and the United States. If any such plot has actually been hatched, it is being executed with unbelievable stupidity. Not only is the German visit further embittering British court circles against Windsor. Far more important, it has already turned British working-class opinion against the Duke, for the British workers are intensely anti-Nazi. And it is not hard to predict that most Americans, who have thus far been the Duke's warmest sympathizers, will as a result of his Nazi visit subject everything he does here to a cold and skeptical scrutiny.

Out of the Everglades

GOVERNOR FREDERICK P. CONE of Florida, comfortably seated in his cheerful suite on the twenty-third floor of the Waldorf-Astoria in New York, was all affability when some half-dozen persons representing the press, labor, the church, and the Committee for Civil Rights in Tampa called to question him about the next move in bringing to justice the men responsible for the murder of Joseph Shoemaker, dead almost two years.

The state had done everything it could, the Governor insisted, and one might be sure that it would continue to do everything it could; he would welcome, he said, investigation by outside agencies, though he expressed strong doubts that they could "do anything." He himself, of course, could do nothing; it was up to the courts, and he has no control over the courts. He was for labor, he drawled, for everybody in fact, and so long as people didn't break the law they'd be safe in Florida. After all, he said, there have been many unsolved murders. Now in California . . .

But the picture of Joseph Shoemaker, tarred and feathered and beaten to death not because he broke the law but because he tried to exercise his simple right of political protest, could not be erased so easily. Sharp questions rose from every corner of the room and pierced the smooth political surfaces like a shower of brass tacks. "The C. I. O. is a legal organization," said a representative of that committee, "but it is being openly said in Florida that the Klan will not permit the C. I. O. to function there. Will you, as governor, guarantee us protection in our legitimate activities in organizing the workers of Florida?" "As long as you don't break any laws," said the Governor (his voice was politic, and he was rising to dismiss the group suavely), "you'll be protected." Then suddenly the heavy, insensitive face became agitated above the wing collar, and the eyes blazed. "But if you try to overthrow the government," he shouted, lifting a long arm, "you'll be rode out on a rail." An antediluvian shadow seemed to fill the room, and the delegation was suddenly looking into dark alleys of ignorance and brutality. "Any man that tried to overthrow the government ought to be hung to a tree," continued the governor of the sovereign state of Florida. His arm still in the air, his eyes still blazing, he said, "If you tried to take anybody's property . . ." He grew more excited. "If you came into my house . . ."

A calm twentieth-century voice interrupted. "If someone broke the law, would you invoke the law against him, or do you believe people should take the law into their own hands?" "If you came into my house . . ." "Would you go to the law first?" the voice persisted. "No! I'd go to *you* first!" In the background now soothing voices were pulling him away and the delegation was being ushered out. But the voice of civil liberties, this time a woman's voice, persisted firmly: "Governor Cone, do you consider the Klan a legal organization?" The Governor knew now that he had said too much. He became almost affable again. "I don't know anything about the Klan," he said, in his politic voice, "except what I read in the newspapers." As the group filed out, his voice trailed after them, almost pleading. "I'm for labor. I'm for everybody . . . " The door closed.

Joseph Shoemaker, leader of the Modern Democrats, a party organized to fight corruption in Tampa, was kidnapped on the night of November 30, 1935, with two companions. All were flogged. Shoemaker died of his injuries. After long delays five Tampa policemen were convicted of having taken part in the kidnapping. The Supreme Court of the state reversed the convictions. After further delay, the same defendants and one other were brought to trial for second-degree murder on October 6. But the judge, after ruling out all testimony presented in the kidnapping trial, directed a verdict of acquittal for lack of evidence.

Governor Cone made it clear that the Shoemaker case is ended as far as Florida is concerned. Shoemaker's murderers are known; they must be brought to justice; and they can be, despite the legal devices that have so far protected them, if the groups and individuals to whom civil liberty is the very condition of their continued existence will unite to force a federal investigation. It can best be done by the La Follette Civil Liberties Committee; pressure by letter and telegram will help bring about such an investigation; in particular we hope the C. I O. will use its best efforts to force exposure of the political and social underworld in which Shoemaker met his death. It could do no greater single service to the cause of labor organization in the South.

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Wall Street and White House

BY ROBERT S. ALLEN

Washington, October 23

INNER White House opinion is firmly convinced that there was more to the precipitate stock-market nose-dive than adverse economic factors. It is frankly admitted that production and sales are sagging ominously. Some of the Administration leaders go farther and concede that the Roosevelt-Morgenthau budget-balancing putsch, with its drastic curtailment of government spending, is largely responsible for this falling off, but all are insistent that certain "intangible" elements also had a big hand in causing the stock-market crash. These "intangible" elements, they charge, are powerful Wall Street interests engaged in a deliberate campaign to smash the Securities and Exchange Commission and to force either the repeal or the modification of the capital-gains and undivided-profits taxes.

In support of their assertion that "big money" is now actively warring on the Administration, White House lieutenants cite the report of Charles Gay, head of the New York Stock Exchange, and the more recent speech of Winthrop Aldrich, liege lord of the Chase National Bank, excoriating the SEC and blaming it for market and business infirmities. Gay's sudden fusillade, it is said, marked the end of the "era of cooperation" between Wall Street and the SEC. Aldrich's harangue was the open declaration of war. Administration supporters point to the fact that Gay's blast came at the very moment when it became certain that Chairman James M. Landis was leaving the SEC to become dean of the Harvard Law School and when reliable information indicated that it was the President's intention to instal Commissioner William O. Douglas in his place. In lashing out at the SEC, Gay was not aiming at the agency under Landis. He was firing at Douglas. Wall Street has savored his mettle and wanted no part of it. It still goes into a cold sweat when it recalls Douglas's bare-knuckled lecture before the Bond Club last spring. The thought of this man as SEC boss gave Gay and his masters the jitters, whereupon Gay opened the faucets of fulmination and announced to the President, in effect, "You appoint this man SEC chairman and we take to the warpath." Douglas was made chairman of the SEC—at the direct instigation of Roosevelt—and Wall Street accepted the challenge. The White House group charges that the dramatic stock-market tailspin was the Street's answer, and that before long they will prove it.

More important than such proof is the fact that the Administration is firmly convinced that Wall Street wants to "get" the SEC and knock out the two keystones of the tax-reform program. This belief has had and will continue to have a determining influence on Administration policy. It accounts for the stiff-necked resistance to the terrific pressure for a reduction of marginal requirements. The undercover pleas and clamor for such action were tremendous. On "Black Tuesday" influential business men on friendly terms with the Administration used every conceivable argument and effort to prevail on Roosevelt and Douglas to "loosen up." Both refused to be stampeded. How long this calm and sound course will be adhered to is uncertain. If Roosevelt doesn't give ground, Douglas can be depended on to stand like Gibraltar. Intimates assert that the President is fixed in his determination to sit tight as regards any concessions to the "speculators." The economic situation, however, they add, is another matter. Roosevelt is worried about the trend industry and business are taking. What he considers doing about it appears uncertain.

This plan of watchful waiting, however, does not include tax revision. On this subject a program is definitely being evolved. Just what is in the offing no one knows except the President and the few Treasury executives directly involved. A multitude of stories, rumors, and reports about what is being considered are going the rounds, but they are pure conjecture. The tax deliberations are as closely and effectively guarded as the government's $5,000,000,000 gold hoard at Fort Knox, Kentucky. However, information is available regarding a counsel that carries great weight with the President and the Treasury. It can be found in David Cushman Coyle's newly published "Why Pay Taxes?" Coyle is regarded by the President and his advisers, and rightly, as the Administration's most brilliant economic analyst.

About the capital-gains tax Coyle has this to say:

> The arguments for abolishing the capital-gains tax are not as compelling as you might suppose from reading the financial columns. . . . It seems reasonable to argue . . . that so long as we have no way to cushion the blow for those who lose in other ways, there is no justice in saving those who speculate unsuccessfully in stocks or real estate.

As for the undivided-profits tax, Coyle would amend it in several important respects. Among other changes, he proposes that:

> 1. A commission, including experts in accounting, should work out a system of accounts for tax purposes that would show real profit and loss in a proper relation to interest and dividends, and that would distinguish working-capital items from fixed capital.
>
> 2. Losses and gains should be spread over a period of years.
>
> 3. Upkeep should be distinguished from expansion, and the tax should rest only on profits used for expansion.
>
> 5. Dividends in stock or other paper of the company should be taxed as not having been actually distributed.
>
> 6. Net earnings up to, say, $15,000, should be exempt from the undistributed-profits tax.

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Notes on "Black Tuesday"

BY MAX LERNER

WALL STREET combines somehow the characteristic features of all the places where men have to chart their chances against fate: it has the atmosphere at once of the sickroom, the gambling-house, the battlefield. And so when the fever chart of Wall Street, usually a matter of only intramural concern, showed a panicky drop last week, the rest of us felt a concern far beyond our own stake in it. It was not only that some twenty-five billions in paper equities were destroyed and thousands of small accounts completely wiped out. What happened on Wall Street was more than a collapse of paper values. It was another of the periodic crises in the history of our capitalism. The dip was so sharp, the charts proved so frightening, that for two days at least Wall Street ran amuck.

I speak of the market break in the past tense, not to propitiate the future, but because—whatever fluctuations may still be in store—the market's record from early August to late October is a significant bit of history. It may be because hard-headed business men are not interested in history that the causes they advance for the market break sound thin and strained. One gets from them an impression of bewilderment seeking refuge in aggressive assertion. I have heard blame laid variously on organized bear raiders, the President, the SEC, the Federal Reserve Board, anti-New Deal feeling, margin requirements, the capital-gains tax, the corporate-surplus tax, John L. Lewis, and the trade unions. I have listened while one man proved that the state of the market was an index of general business conditions, and another argued as cogently that the market was an entity in itself unrelated to the real world of business. One man states that because of government policies the sources of saving and therefore of capital investment have been dried up, and another man complains that because of the same policies there has been a lot of idle money lying about. I have heard the element of fear minimized and maximized. I have heard that a big factor was Japanese selling by order of the Japanese government, and that the same applied to Italy. Many of the people I talked to were so close to the market that they needed perspective; for them the lights of the world went out when stock prices zoomed down. But there was one, a nationally known economist, whose comment had a startlingly Olympian ring. "To us, of course," he said, and he seemed thousands of light-years away, "such things are merely secondary epiphenomena."

On the whole, you can range the explanations in four groups. There are the theories of deliberate conspiracy. There are the theories that run primarily in economic terms. There are the theories that look to government and politics for the real causes. And finally, there are the psychological theories, which stress fear and hysteria. You may be a one-theory man; if so, you may have your pick. I happen not to be, and I find it interesting to look back at this bit of history and construct out of it something of a mosaic.

It is hard to have much faith in the conspiracy theories, whether the sinister figures in them are the manipulators or government functionaries. I cannot believe that Mr. Morgenthau, Mr. Douglas, and Mr. Eccles are conspiring to destroy the exchanges; I don't hold bears like Ben Smith or Matt Brush responsible; nor can I believe that Mr. Gay and Mr. Aldrich, the head of the Stock Exchange and the chairman of Chase National, are suicidal wreckers, bent on going to their own doom if thereby they can prove Mr. Roosevelt wrong.

One may salvage from this whole approach a single item, which relates to the perversely different attitude of the business community toward this stock break, as compared with the 1929 break. Take the case of Charles R. Gay. Here is a mediocre man, blundering but well-intentioned, placed at the head of an immense gambling establishment that happens to be integral to American business. His August 17 statement took the form of sharp criticism of government regulation of the market, yet actually it made Wall Street examine itself critically. Evidently the figure in the mirror was not reassuring, for the speech was followed by a stock drop; and though James Landis answered it vigorously in his farewell statement as chairman of the SEC—a statement, incidentally, that cost him the editorial plaudits that he would otherwise have received on retirement—the damage was done. Or take the case of Winthrop W. Aldrich. President of our biggest bank, brother-in-law of John D. Rockefeller, formerly a New Deal supporter, such a man obviously speaks with deliberation. His speech, too, was an attack on government regulation, and contained, in addition, a demoralizing analysis of the weakness and thinness of the market. Again, on October 14 as on August 4, there was a drop, but this time sharper and more panicky. The interesting thing is that in the Coolidge and Hoover administrations men like Mr. Gay and Mr. Aldrich were talking not defeatism but optimism. These two men were not conspirators, but, given slight market disturbances, they used them consciously or unconsciously to frighten the Administration and extract concessions from Mr. Roosevelt, who was already showing signs of weakening on the budget issue, along the lines of tax alleviation and changes in the SEC.

It is best not to emphasize the personal element. It is only a phase of the larger perspective. And that perspective must be viewed in terms of the basic business conditions. Nothing that the business leaders said and very little that the government did would have much effect

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if it were not for the framework of business discouragement. It should be seen, I think, in terms of a failure of hopes and not of a definite business recession. There were few signs of actual recession, and even now the combined business indices show a sharp drop after rather than before the stock decline. What was wrong, briefly, was that Wall Street had been experiencing a stock boom in anticipation of an industrial boom that failed to come off. When it became abundantly clear that the industrial boom would not materialize and that the future looked dreary, the stock boom collapsed, and in its collapse —pushed on by anti-Administration sentiment, blundering strategy, and general hysteria—it turned into a panic.

The curious thing is that, however much Wall Street and the Administration differ on other matters, they join forces in insisting that there is not much connection between the stock collapse and industrial conditions. Yet the evidence would indicate, as the English *New Statesman* pointed out last week, that the wheels of capitalism are again slowing down, not only in America but in England and France as well. As far as America is concerned, judged by previous depressions, the process of recovery has been curiously long and slow. The stock crash came in 1929; the low point industrially was reached in March, 1933. There was a sensational spurt of business recovery in the summer of 1933, due largely to the stocking up of inventories in an attempt to beat the NRA, followed by a sharp recession. Another spurt was made in 1935, which in turn slowed down. Economists and business men had been looking for a third spurt this fall. There were ample supplies of cheap money; in fact, one of the remarkable things about this depression has been the continuance of low interest rates into a far later stage of the recovery than usual. There was also a good consumer demand, stimulated by reemployment, by wage increases following a successful labor-organizing campaign, and by government outlays for relief and public works. The stage was set for a boom in the durable (or capital) goods industries, including construction, railways, and the utilities. New housing especially was hoped for, and there were good prospects of a demand from business and industry for replacement of equipment that had been long deferred.

None of these expectations have been realized. The housing boom, for complex reasons, has not come through. New equipment and replacements have not been ordered. The reason is that easy money available at low interest rates is not being taken advantage of. How much this is due, again, to fear and hatred of the Administration, how much of it is due to the hostility of business to the corporate-surplus tax and the capital-gains tax, how much responsibility must be assigned to rising prices and labor costs are questions beyond the scope of this article. A drive will undoubtedly be made to fix the blame on taxes and labor costs. But I find the best economic opinion convinced that these factors are by no means primary. The important fact is that investments in the stock market have been booming, and stock prices rising fantastically to a point where they have been twenty-five or thirty or even forty times the net earnings. That has meant an inflated market, and the wind had somehow to be taken out.

The question of the government's role in the market break is a vexed one. I am convinced it is by no means as clear as either side makes it out to be. The Administrations feels itself blameless, and attributes the whole thing to Wall Street's hostility and its case of jitters. The Street on the other hand accuses the Administration of meddling and persecution. Its indictment may, I think, be put under two heads. One relates to the regulatory agencies. The second relates to general Administration policies.

It may be said quite confidently that the case against the regulatory agencies is almost wholly baseless. The agencies principally involved are the Federal Reserve Board and the SEC. The Reserve Board is attacked from the left for not lowering the reserve requirements when it spotted danger, and thus moving back toward inflation; but the argument seems to ignore the fact that there was no lack of money for investment, but rather a lack of desire to use it. The SEC is attacked from the right for tying the market up with petty regulations, reducing its volume of operations and making it "thin" by unreasonable restrictions, and in general entangling it in a bureaucratic net. As far as bureaucracy is concerned, there can be no doubt that it takes a huge staff operating under detailed rules to regulate a crowd as slippery and intransigent as the stock-market crowd. That drastic regulation was needed is no longer arguable. The interesting thing about the recent stock break is that it was not primarily the result of a speculative frenzy, as was the case in 1929. The market was to a great extent an investors' market, thanks largely to the SEC regulations. It is true that the thinness of the market made it more vulnerable to the impact of bearish factors and forced liquidations. But if it had been a larger and more speculative market, and if the margin requirements had been lower, many feel that the crash would have been even more severe.

What Wall Street will not recognize in all its criticism of the SEC is that the stock market as we know it is a relic left over from a past Golden Age. The Exchange still lives in the memory of its vanished splendor of the 1920's and it maintains in million-share days the proportions it had in the five- and seven-million-share days. There is literally not enough business to go around among the 1,500 members. The brokers, many of them rich men's sons for whom there was no other career, have fallen on lean days. They can't make enough on stock commissions, they are hemmed about in their attempts to speculate on the side, and there seems to be no way by which they can reduce their numbers and shrink the business to profitable proportions. They have become fretful and embittered, and spend their energy making a butt of the nearest object—the SEC.

Far more serious is the indictment that may be made of general Administration policy. I am not referring to the tax policies, which, compared with the English, are anything but excessive. What is more in point is the indecision of the Administration as to where it is going and

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what methods it will employ in getting there. I sympathized with one banker when he said that he could understand a capitalist regime and he could understand a collectivist regime, but he was baffled by this mixture of the two. He was, of course, regarding it from the right and I from the left, but we both recognized the same fact. Compromises in scope and aim must always be made in a real world, but it seems part of the Roosevelt policy to achieve its compromises through vacillations between groups of advisers whose aims and premises are wholly different and cancel each other out. I refer in this connection to the recent deflationary moves of the President in seeking to balance the budget by cutting down relief and construction funds rather than by seeking new tax sources. Business had, to be sure, been calling for budget balancing and reduction of expenses; yet Roosevelt's moves in this direction came at a time when the anticipated business pick-up was not materializing, when it was becoming clear that stock prices were too high. Thus even for business the result of such moves was disastrous. The President chose exactly the wrong time to return to a more primitive capitalism.

If these are roughly the factors that brought about the stock break, there still remains the question of how it gained enough acceleration on the way down to produce for two days a frenzied panic. Empirical conditions, either in industry or in government policy, will not explain the swiftness and extent of the decline. For that we must turn to the psychological—to fear, and how it has battened on the tensions of the eight years that have elapsed since 1929.

It must be remembered that what we are pleased to call the business community can become under extreme pressure a chaotic and irresponsible mob. A man who witnessed the trading on the morning of "Black Tuesday" told me that it gave him the feeling of a trampling mob in a theater fire. There were stretches of time when blocks of "blue chip" securities, offered at almost nothing, could not get a bid. The truth is that Wall Street men, like other organisms highly specialized for predatory pursuits, have not been able to accommodate themselves to the conditions of change. They have been battered for years by forces they cannot understand, and they are riddled with the most irrational fears. The Wall Street jungle of today is filled with Emperor Joneses. What we have regarded as the toughest and most viable of all capitalisms is at the same time as subject to panic as a frightened savage caught in a jungle at night—a jungle of his own fears, superstitions, and racial memories.

Internal Politics in Spain

BY LOUIS FISCHER

Valencia, October 10

WHILE Spaniards die by thousands, republican Spain lives more fully than ever. Social upheaval and civil war induce quick changes. Remarkable progress has been made in the last three months. The army is more efficient and the government more powerful. The people's faith in victory is firmer and their discipline greater. The Socialists are stronger, the Communists relatively weaker, and the Anarchists have less chance of being admitted into the Cabinet.

Ten days ago I flew over the Pyrenees, now once more powdered with snow, to Valencia and rushed directly from the aerodrome to the Cortes session. Prime Minister Juan Negrin was speaking. "We are going to save the world," he said. "We shall awake from the lethargy in which we have lived for two centuries. I have faith in Spain. I believe in our victory." This is an optimism that springs from achievement.

Then Señor Portela Valladares rose. He was Prime Minister on February 16, 1936, when the Popular Front won the election. Two days later, as Count Romanones, the famous friend of Alfonso XIII, recently told a foreign ambassador, the feudal barons and army chiefs began to plot the rebellion. Portela revealed in his Cortes address that the reactionaries had tried to dissuade him from handing over the government to what he called the "legally elected" Popular Front. "But the people had expressed their choice, and only the people are right." Soon after the insurrection, however, Portela wrote a letter to General Franco offering homage and support. Now he wished "to affirm my adhesion and sympathy for the government. I am confident of the future. Without the republican government, there can be no Spain." Recantation notwithstanding, many people resented his presence in the Cortes, and when Guerra del Rio, a deputy of the corrupt Lerroux party, took the floor, the Communists marched out in a body. Subsequently anonymous leaflets were circulated in Valencia denouncing these and other conservative parliamentarians who dared to reappear in the country they had once betrayed. But the government, conscious of its stability and the restraint of its supporters, invited this opposition at home for the sake of the impression which the converts' confessions and professions would be sure to make in rebel ranks and abroad.

The decision to move the national capital from Valencia to Barcelona is another and much finer proof of the strength and resolution of the Negrin Cabinet. The enemy can easily interpret this move as a "flight" to a point nearer the frontier, and for this reason not all friends are convinced of its wisdom. But where practical necessity dictates, the government pays no heed to the possibility of a first unfavorable reaction. Catalonia, the

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jester says, is the only state which has strictly adhered to the policy of non-intervention. This is not of course literally true, yet there is enough in the statement to make it a good joke. Without Catalonia and without the fullest exploitation of Barcelona's industrial potentialities the war cannot be won. With Catalonian industries fully utilized, republican Spain could in nine months produce all its own army equipment—heavy bombers and artillery excluded. The transfer is not motivated by fear of a military defeat. Dr. Negrin spoke to me about its desirability in Madrid last July during the battle of Brunete. He said that if the offensive was successful, Madrid would be safe from capture and he could then shift the government to Barcelona despite its distance from the besieged former capital.

The removal will also enable the Spanish republic to take full advantage of its improved relations with France and other nations. Some day the Western democracies' deeply dormant instinct of self-preservation will be sufficiently awakened to induce them to help themselves by helping the Loyalists. Meanwhile the republic relies on its own growing force and trusts in its ability to tap known but still untouched resources. The army fought better at Belchite on the Aragon front than at Brunete in the Sierra line. Its organization and its transport system are better, though it is short of good officers, deficient in artillery, and seriously outnumbered in the air. Despite Nyon, the Mediterranean is not yet quite safe, and for many weeks no ships have come through from the Black Sea. But Madrid will hold out. The southern front, where the war may ultimately be won, is temporarily being neglected in order to stiffen further the Aragon line. Most of the Italians have been transferred from the north to the Saragossa region, but they will find the government prepared. Mussolini's heroes enter the peninsula in regular shipments. Nevertheless, the government is convinced that it can resist endlessly in the heart of Spain and perhaps, if weather contributes, retain part of the Asturias. Ministers say the war will last from one to two years more. The population suffers stoically; the nearer the front, the greater the enthusiasm. And even where there is no ecstasy there is conviction of an ultimate triumph. Food scarcity has become a serious problem. The authorities are importing supplies and have now allocated huge sums for still larger purchases in foreign countries. Rationing is not yet as general as the privations which make it necessary. On the whole, an astounding amount of economic laissez faire, personal freedom, and political immunity continues to testify to the vigor of democracy and its disadvantages in war time.

The hardiness of republican optimism must seem miraculous to those who have not been in intimate contact with the violent anti-fascism, the strong distaste for the ugly past, which dominates Loyalist Spain. After the rout of the Italians at Guadalajara the morale in Franco territory dropped sharply. We know this from revealing articles in fascist newspapers. But the republic has lost Toledo, Malaga, Bilbao, and Santander, and still its spirit is buoyant, its nerves steady, its faith high. An army can be defeated, a people never. The rebels have an army but no masses. The masses will forge their own weapons.

This conviction is the strength of the Negrin government. Before the Cortes assembled, rumor had it that Caballero would try to overthrow the Cabinet. But he did not even appear. He was too busy defending his weakened position in the U. G. T. (General Union of Workers). On May 28, shortly after Negrin became Prime Minister, the national committee of the U. G. T. voted twenty-four to fourteen to support the new Cabinet. Caballero, nevertheless, prevented the smaller executive committee from adopting the same policy, and when the individual trade unions insisted on announcing their adherence to the Negrin platform, Caballero proceeded to suspend them from the federation on the ridiculous ground that they had failed to pay their dues. In this manner he expelled first nine unions, including the brave Asturian miners (just then engaged in a heroic struggle against Franco's legions), then others in quick succession, until he himself was left—at the last count—with only nine unions inside the organization, while thirty-two had been thrown out. Only Caballero's known inflexibility and unrivaled political myopia can explain this strange action in the midst of a war. It is the very opposite of democracy. Some of his best friends have deserted him, others are chafing, and he may soon be a general with a small staff but no soldiers. Nevertheless, such is the decency of this civilized country that no tongue moves to offend him personally, and the majority of the U. G. T., led by Gonzales Peña, an Asturian miner, has offered to negotiate with the hopeless rump which retains the headquarters and the federation's international connections but only a remnant of its membership.

The Caballero myth is dissolving and with it the political menace implicit in his opposition. The Negrin-Prieto bloc is in consequence enormously reinforced. Moreover, the Communists have yielded strategic ground. For many months a struggle has gone on for the political control of the republican army. The Communists wanted it and thought they were entitled to it. Almost half the soldiers, most of the political commissars, and many of the outstanding officers are Communists. On the issue of control they gave battle to Caballero and won. But Prieto, the new Minister of War, has withstood them stoutly, and the honors, for the moment at least, are his. Last July he published a decree prohibiting party propaganda in the army. The Communists were irritated but bowed. They threatened active resistance, however, if the Cabinet enforced a second decree, already approved, proscribing party propaganda by army officers among the civil population. The publication of this decree was accordingly postponed, but Prieto issued it on October 7. He would not have been surprised if a political crisis had resulted, but, instead, the Communist Party publicly declared its readiness to obey.

This accords with the new line of the Communists. The party has issued instructions against "sectarianism," that is, against pressing party interests and party claims to the obvious detriment of other anti-fascist groups. It follows that the campaign for Socialist-Communist fusion, which has provoked the rising displeasure

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of Socialists, will no longer be pushed with the same vehemence. Some of the energy thus saved will be devoted to encouraging agrarian collectivization. The Communist policy of internal peace has already brought a partial truce in the war of editorials and polemics between Communists and Anarchists. A committee, consisting of two Anarchists (the Anarchist Berbegal is chairman), two representatives from the already amalgamated Socialist-Communist youth, two bourgeois republicans, and one syndicalist or Anarchist oppositionist, has been formed to coordinate the activities of all anti-fascist youth organizations. Finally, the Communists want the C. N. T., the Anarcho-Syndicalist trade-union federation, to be represented in the Negrin Cabinet. Caballero's chief strength, paradoxically, lies in his pact with the Anarchists. The Communists wish to deprive him of this support. But the Socialists contend that if the Caballero who had the bulk of the U. G. T. behind him could do no damage even with the Anarchists ready to help him, there is no reason to pervert strategy to defeat him; he has already been defeated by his own blunders.

The main argument against Anarchist Cabinet members is that they cannot control their followers. The Anarchist-Trotskyist putsch in Barcelona in May took place although there were then four Anarchists in the Cabinet; Garcia Oliver, the Anarchist Minister of Justice, went to Barcelona to assist in suppressing the disturbance, and returned to complain that no one would listen to him. In a coalition each minister is expected to bring to the government the backing of his party. The Anarchist leaders have no such power. Moreover, the peasants of Aragon and Catalonia cannot quickly forget the troubles the Anarchists brought on them, and the government would lose popularity if it now admitted the C. N. T. For this and other reasons the Cabinet feels that it can rule even from Barcelona without Anarchist participation. If Negrin feeds Barcelona and nationalizes its industries, he will have the city with him.

The republic's main preoccupation is not internal politics. It is the foreign situation. How slow these democracies are, how difficult to shake them into a realization of the dangers that beset them! One merely asks that the British be pro-British and the French pro-French. If these countries lack the sense to let Loyalist Spain safeguard their interests, they will be forced to do the fighting themselves later on.

Feeble Geneva

BY ROBERT DELL

Geneva, October 12

THE best that one can say about the recent sessions of the League Council and Assembly is that they might have been worse. Not that the members of the League of Nations rose to the occasion or shouldered their responsibilities under the Covenant. Far from it. But in Geneva we are grateful for small mercies. The condition of the patient is still serious, but there has been a slight increase of strength during the last month. The reason is that the British government has not been able to have things entirely its own way. It would be difficult to exaggerate the services that Litvinov renders to the League. He knows what he wants, he stands firm on points that he considers essential, but he keeps his action within the limit of what is possible and he prefers even a quarter of a loaf to no bread. What is more, he says what he thinks—which is rare in Geneva. He understands that, as he himself said in his speech before the Assembly on September 21, "the time has come for those to whom the interests of peace are really dear to tell the parrots in high places that nonsense repeated day by day does not cease thereby to be nonsense, that a spade should be called a spade and aggression aggression, whatever slogan it decorates itself with." As a diplomatist he was head and shoulders above any delegate at the recent Assembly.

Valuable services were also rendered by Isidro Fabela, Mexico's permanent delegate to the League, who headed the Mexican delegation at the Assembly, and by his colleagues, Augustin Leñero, Mexican Minister in Prague, and Señorita Palma Guillén, Mexican Minister in Copenhagen. The return of Mexico to Geneva has been a great gain for the League. W. J. Jordan, the delegate of New Zealand, has also been very useful. He is not in the least a diplomatist, but he is courageous and obstinate and his bluntness is a welcome change from the conventional platitudes to which we are accustomed. When the resolution condemning the Japanese bombing of Chinese open towns was being drafted by the Far East Advisory Committee, Lord Cranborne on behalf of the British delegation tried to prevent Japan from being mentioned by name. Wellington Koo, Litvinov, and Jordan led the opposition to this British attempt to curry favor with Japan. Jordan said that it would be a scandal if Japan were not mentioned, and that if it were not he would vote against the resolution. He suggested that Lord Cranborne should propose also to omit any mention of China and to condemn the bombing of open towns "somewhere or other by somebody or other." The opposition was successful, and the resolution unanimously adopted by the Assembly stated that the Chinese towns had been bombarded by Japanese aircraft.

The weakness of the British stand on Japan in the Assembly and the concessions to Italy that followed the Nyon conference confirmed Mussolini's impression that the British and French governments are afraid of the ag-

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gressive powers, and that he has only to go on kicking them to get what he wants. He has since had further confirmation. On September 24 the British and French governments sent their chargés d'affaires in Rome to Count Ciano, the Italian Foreign Minister, to ask Mussolini to condescend to enter into tripartite conversations. When Delbos announced this fact to the French press in Geneva on the same evening, he used brave words. The Italian Foreign Minister, he said, had been told that the British and French governments were ready to enter into tripartite conversations with Italy, but only on one condition: Mussolini must give them something more than declarations; he must show his good faith by acts. The first and most essential preliminary to any negotiations was the withdrawal of the Italian troops from Spain and the Balearic Islands and a guaranty that no Italian "volunteers" would remain on Spanish soil and that no more would be sent to Spain. Delbos added that a communiqué identical with his statement would be issued in London that evening. The communiqué was issued, but it was far from being identical with the statement of Delbos. It mentioned the visit of the British chargé d'affaires, but not that of the French chargé d'affaires. It said that the British government agreed to Delbos's proposal that there should be tripartite discussions between the British, French, and Italian governments, but did not mention the conditions attached by Delbos to this proposal, because, of course, the British government did not agree with those conditions. This is an example of the contemptuous way in which the British government treats its subordinates in Paris, who entirely deserve it. On October 2 the British and French delegates voted in the Assembly for a resolution which said, among other things:

> [The Assembly] regrets that not merely has the London Non-Intervention Committee failed but that it must today be recognized that there are veritable foreign army corps on Spanish soil, which represents foreign intervention in Spanish affairs; sincerely trusts that the diplomatic action recently initiated by certain powers will be successful in securing the immediate and complete withdrawal of the non-Spanish combatants taking part in the struggle in Spain; . . . and notes that if such a result cannot be obtained in the near future, the members of the League which are parties to the non-intervention agreement will consider ending the policy of non-intervention.

On the same day the British and French governments sent to the Italian government a note of which the tone and the language were very different from those of the resolution just quoted. There was no longer any question of "immediate and complete withdrawal." The British and French governments humbly suggested that the withdrawal of "at least a substantial number" of the foreign combatants would ease the international situation. For the rest, the note was so obsequious in tone and so completely lacking in any firmness that Mussolini naturally thought that the British and French governments were not in earnest and replied to the Anglo-French invitation with a blank negative.

By the time that this article appears in print, you will know whether the worms have at last turned. At the time of writing we have no indication about their attitude, but there are signs that Neville Chamberlain at least wishes to go on negotiating with friend Mussolini. Unless the British and French governments at once raise the embargo on the export of war materials to Spain and open the French frontier, they will be guilty of a breach of faith toward the Spanish government. At the meeting of the committee that drafted the resolution on the Spanish question Alvarez Del Vayo objected to the statement that if the immediate and complete withdrawal of the non-Spanish combatants could not be obtained in "the near future" the members of the League that were parties to the non-intervention agreement would consider ending the policy of non-intervention. Vayo said with reason that the expression "the near future" was too vague and might be given widely different interpretations. Delbos gave him a formal assurance that the French government meant by the phrase not more than ten days, and that if a satisfactory reply were not received from Mussolini within ten days, the French government would act. This assurance was, I believe, confirmed by Lord Cranborne, the British delegate on the committee. It was only in consideration of this assurance that the Spanish delegation consented to accept the resolution. The ten days have now expired, and the French frontier is still closed.

The Spanish delegation, nevertheless, did well to accept the resolution, for, although not satisfactory, it was better than anybody had expected. The best proof of that is the opposition that it excited on the part of all the friends of Franco. When it came before the Assembly, the delegates of Albania and Portugal voted against it and thus prevented it from being formally adopted, as unanimity was necessary. From the practical point of view, however, the action of Albania and Portugal was of little or no importance, and from the political point of view their negative vote was perhaps more to the advantage of the Spanish government than their abstention would have been. Of the European members of the League nineteen voted for the resolution, two voted against it, and five abstained. The five were Austria and Hungary, which are Italian satellites, Bulgaria, which is under German influence, Switzerland, whose Foreign Minister, Motta, is pro-fascist and a great admirer of Mussolini, and the Irish Free State. The reason given by De Valera for the Irish abstention was that the resolution committed Ireland to the abandonment of the policy of non-intervention. This was not the case, as was pointed out to De Valera a dozen times by a half a dozen different people, but he is an obstinate man and when he gets an idea into his head, it is quite impossible for anyone to get it out. The abstention that surprised everybody was that of South Africa, which nobody understands to this day. Eight Latin American states—the Argentine Republic, Bolivia, Chile, Cuba, Panama, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela—also abstained, and for the same reason as that for which they voted against the reelection of Spain to the Council, namely, that they had failed to strike a bargain with the Spanish government about the rebel refugees in their embassies and legations in Madrid. They insisted on conditions that the Spanish

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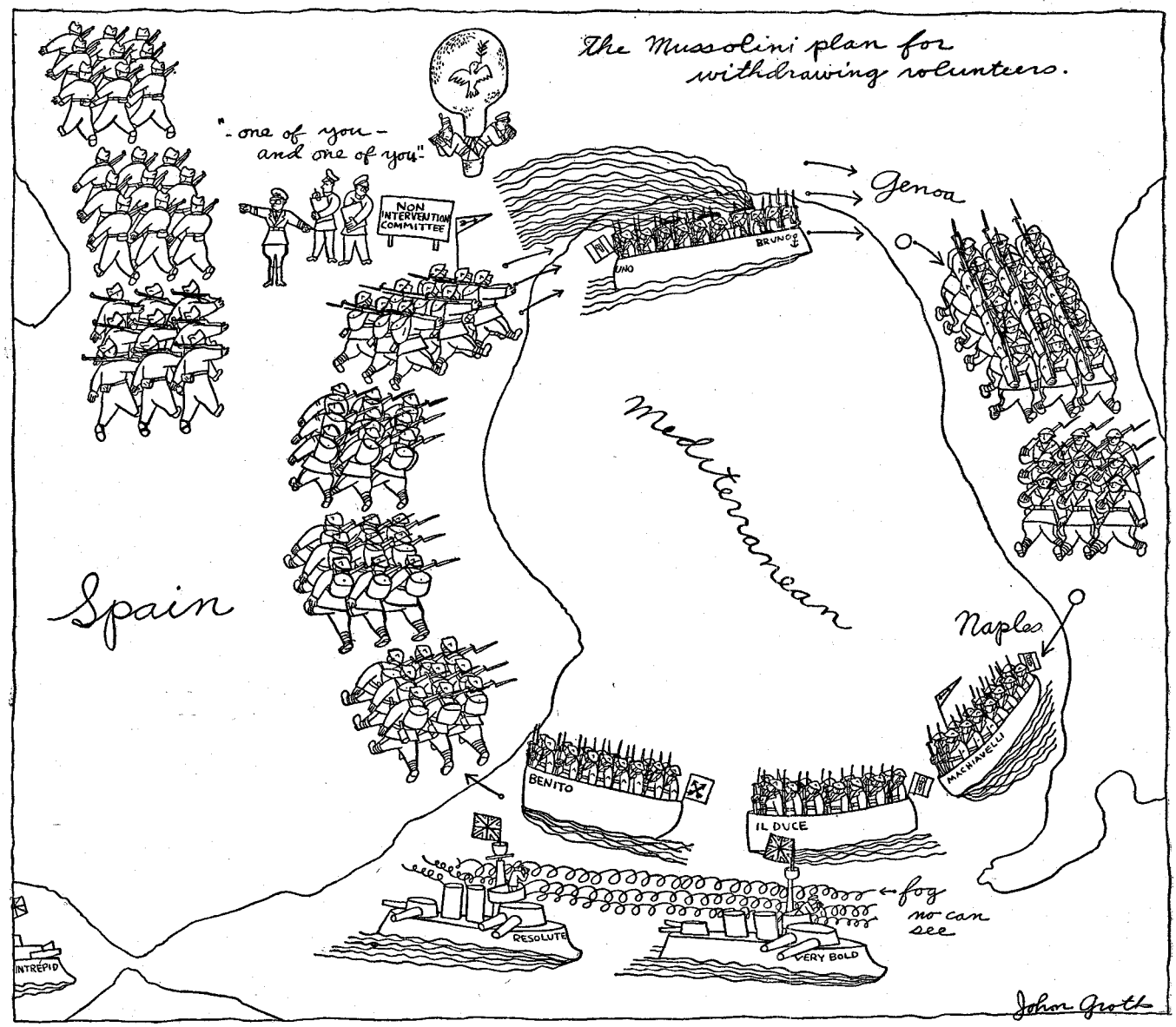
government was unable to accept. Colombia, Ecuador, Haiti, and Mexico saved the credit of Latin America by voting for the resolution.

The other matter of first-class importance before the Assembly was the Chinese appeal against Japanese aggression. The appeal was made in the first place to the Council, which with the consent of China referred it to the Far East Advisory Committee set up by the Assembly in February, 1933. Wellington Koo agreed to this course subject to the understanding that the Council itself remained seized to the appeal and that the Chinese government reserved the right, if and when circumstances required it, to ask the Council to take action in accordance with the procedure of Article XVII of the Covenant, which deals with disputes in which one of the parties is not a member of the League. The reports and resolution adopted first by the Advisory Committee and then by the Assembly were again much better than had been expected, although they fell far short of the obligations of the Covenant, for they proposed no measures to stop the aggression. Nor did they say explicitly that Japan had been guilty of aggression. They did say, however, that Japan had invaded and attacked China and that the Japanese action was "in contravention of Japan's obligations under the Nine-Power Treaty of February 6, 1922, and under the Pact of Paris of August 27, 1928." In this case, too, the British delegation were obliged to go farther than they had intended. Their desire to shield Japan was shown by Cranborne's grotesque proposal.

The most active enemy of China on the Advisory Committee was the Polish delegate, Komarnicki, who acted throughout as the advocate of Japan and abstained when the reports and resolution were adopted by the Assembly. This is significant. For the last two years it has been believed in Eastern Europe that there was an alliance, or at any rate a close understanding, between Poland and Japan, aimed against Soviet Russia. The relations between the Japanese embassy in Warsaw and the Polish Ukrainians are close and peculiar. The Polish Ukrainians appear to have forgotten their grievances against the Polish government and are concentrating their energies on stirring up trouble in Russian Ukraine. There is little doubt that the Japanese embassy in Warsaw has supplied funds for that purpose. The conduct



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of Komarnicki clearly shows than an alliance or close understanding between Poland and Japan exists. It is in fact if not in form a triple alliance of Germany, Poland, and Japan. On the Chinese question the Assembly was unanimous. There was no vote against the reports and resolution of the Advisory Committee, and only Poland and Siam abstained.

The news of President Roosevelt's speech reached Geneva on the last day of the Assembly. It was received by the British delegation with more embarrassment than pleasure. It now remains to be seen whether the Brussels conference will have any effective result.

I cannot conclude this summary of the Assembly's session without mentioning an incident that caused deep pain to Léon Blum's friends and admirers, especially those whose frendship with him is of long date. He spent a few days in Geneva during the Assembly and, although he was not a member of the French delegation, allowed himself to be put up by the delegation to make a speech at the meeting of the drafting committee against any declaration by the League that Italy had been guilty of aggression against Spain. He admitted the fact of aggression but said that if the Assembly formally declared Italy to be an aggressor any negotiations with the Italian government would probably be impossible. This speech, as might be expected, has caused profound resentment in republican Spain, where the press has denounced Blum as a "social traitor."

The Peasants' War

BY RAMON SENDER

WE ARRIVED at Adamuz by a country road which was in good order, but we raised so much dust that the following car had to keep far behind to avoid it. We passed by vineyards and olive groves. As we entered the town, the women hid in the doorways and waited to raise their fists in salute until we had done so. They were very uncertain. The town had been in the power of the fascists, who had murdered and robbed as they pleased. When the peasants took it with sporting guns, loaded with small shot, and a few dynamite cartridges, they had captured the sons of some of the big landowners of the district. That was a fortnight ago.

"Where are you keeping them?" we asked, expecting them to reply that they had shot them, but we were glad to hear that they had only imprisoned them.

"We shot three," replied a peasant, "who had murdered the chiefs of the peasants' syndicate. But these others, although we took them with arms in their hands, aren't so dangerous. Of course," he added stoically, "if a time comes when those of us who are still here have to join the others to fight at a distance from the town, there will be nothing for it"—and he made a grave gesture of sincere resignation—"but to leave the old ones tranquil."

In other words, they would decide to shoot their prisoners only as a last resort. These prisoners were the feudal gentry of the neighborhood, who had been sowing hatred for years and years.

Soon after the victory of the rights in the 1934 elections I heard a man, his eyes shining with hate, tell two large landowners of that province, "I'll lose no time in seeing that these laborers dance on the hills." He meant to say that he would see them reduced to such a state of misery that they would have to go outside his estates and live like goats, nibbling the herbage. He and his kind succeeded to some extent, for the peasants in many cases during the winter of 1935-36 had to boil the roots of wild plants as their only food. And yet these same peasants, from whose culture a high moral standard was not to be expected, respected the lives of the landowners "until an extreme case should come," and would shoot them only to secure peace for the old people of the village before leaving it.

The rebels sowed desolation during the seven days in which the village was in their hands. There was not a single house in which some member of the family was not murdered. The chiefs of the syndicate were marched on foot to the cemetery, where they were forced to dig their own graves. While they were digging, the gentry of the Falange taunted them: "Don't you say the earth is for those who labor in it? Now, you see, you are going to get your share. You can keep that piece of land over you until the Day of Judgment." Others said: "You needn't dig so deep; it is already deep enough for a dog's grave." Or they would advise them to leave a little step where the head could lie, "so that they would be more comfortable."

The peasants went on digging in silence. One of them tried to escape, but they caught him after wounding him in the leg. He was kept three days in prison without attention to the wound, and then they made him be present at the shooting of the others. On the fourth day they made him come out and took him again to the cemetery. The peasants told us that the rebels did not shoot their victims in the usual way with a firing squad, but amused themselves by shooting them with revolvers, as in target practice.

They compelled that unfortunate man to open a grave, telling him that it was for someone else, and when that was done they made him lie down at full length in it, "to see if it would hold a human body." When he had done so, they fired on him, and without troubling to see whether he had been killed ordered the gravedigger to fill in the grave. The gravedigger said, "He seems to be

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moving still." The Falangists pointed their revolvers at him and warned him to take care because "many a man is hung by his tongue."

The peasants of Adamuz made the comment: "What wickedness! Who would have thought that educated men who have always lived like gentlemen could fall so low?" Then they added, "Whether there is war or not, a man is always a man."

A little old woman came crying, and laid hold of the sleeve of a comrade. "Tell this to the Madrid government, sir," she said. "Tell them this: they killed my Antoñito, but only because they tied his hands first. He went like this, like this, the son of my soul"—the woman joined her two white wrists, as thin as those of a child—"and it was only that way that they could finish him off. My boy could have fought all these bloody gentry with his fists, but they tied him with string, like this, like this!" And again she showed us her crossed wrists.

"And the husband of her"—pointing to another peasant woman in black who was sobbing and biting her white handkerchief, with her head resting against the door—"they killed him in his own bed, from which he couldn't rise. Ill from going to the olive harvest, an old man, and him enduring the winter chills without enough food. And when he kept to his bed because he couldn't stand, the masters themselves came with revolvers and finished him off. He died, poor man, in his bed, like a little bird, without saying a word."

We could not get over our astonishment. Why did they kill these old men? From what lust for blood and cruelty? The old woman, in a rush of words, explained it to us: "What did for this woman's husband is that two winters ago he went with two others to ask for a rise of a penny in the olive-harvest wages. But he didn't even speak. He went as the oldest of the laborers, and it was the others who spoke, the young ones."

Everywhere we came across the track of crime. They told us about the death of the victims, with details of such a nature as to make us think, not of a war, but of a collective moral madness which had come like a burning and putrid wind from the rebel camp.

In the Middle Ages it was said, and it is still said in some villages, that when epidemics came the "atmosphere was corrupted." Then and today that is true of Franco's camp. Assassination has become part of the regular habits of his people. The Falangists and the traditionalists took communion in the morning, and before beginning their political work for the day used to go round to the jail and accompany ten or twelve to the cemetery. For half an hour they had target practice on them, and could then go back to their houses, kiss their children, and talk to them about morality, the family, and the country.

A man who escaped from Cordova told us some monstrous details. They had forced a young assistant professor of the institute to take up arms, but he took the first chance of crossing over to the loyal troops. Their revenge fell on the family, which was gradually exterminated. His wife had a son six months old, still at the breast. The mother and child were imprisoned. They did not allow the mother to have linen to change the child's clothing or water to wash it. The mother lost her milk, and they did not even allow the child to be fed artificially. They left them that way for twenty-five days, after which they wrested the child, half dead with hunger, from its mother's arms, and took her to the priest for confession. Then they took her to the cemetery and killed her.

"Up to now," our informant told us, "they have killed some nine thousand persons, counting men and women."

They showed us a Cordova newspaper which we read eagerly. It was a medley of stupidity, deliberate infamy, and a kind of degenerate sensuous poetry which made childish rhymes and spoke of the Moors who came "from the crescent moon." We mourned over such pitiful wickedness, Spanish blood perverted by pleasure in crime, by pride in its own force, a force which was nothing but an executioner's repression of moral inhibitions. They wished to build a myth of justice on crime, and what they were doing was to widen the channels of the torrent into which they would all fall, drowned in the blood they were spilling.

Meanwhile Quiepo de Llano, a few miles off, was murdering by thousands, having all the workers whose names were on the rolls of the syndicates shot in masses on the pretext that they had tried to strike. Among the victims were women who begged for mercy with tears. Hundreds of these women in Cordova and Seville and Granada were shot after they had seen their husbands die, shot with their hungry and half-naked children clinging madly to their skirts. And Queipo, in his drunkard's voice, kept proclaming on the radio that he represented order, the family, and morality.

We left our woman comrade in Adamuz. She grumbled, although still with her crystal-like resonance. But from there onward the country was unsafe. The cavalry patrols of the enemy were active, and there had been isolated attacks. The very day before, an incident had cost the life of one of the city militia. He was on guard at a crossroads. In an adjoining olive grove an individual appeared, about five-and-forty years old, holding himself well, but looking dazed and feverish. The guard did not recognize him, although he was the parish priest, for he was in civilian dress. He called the militiaman by name and asked him for water.

When the militiaman put down his rifle—when the town was recaptured they had got two dozen rifles from the Fascists—and began to untie his water bottle, the unknown man stuck a knife in his belly, telling him, "You won't recover from that in a dozen years." The guard fell, and the other four who formed the picket came up at his cries. The man tried to escape, but they shot him. A peasant describing the incident to me said: "This misfortune happened because these other peasants wouldn't listen to me when I told them that we ought to seize the priest and jug him. They said that they weren't against religion, if it behaved decently. Now you have it. That's their decency." And he added, "What good do we get from not attacking religion if the priests attack us?"

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Other peasants declared that there were priests in neighboring villages who were "friends of the poor," and as such had not been molested, but the discontented man would have none of that. "Priests," he declared, "are inhuman by nature. They begin by not marrying, which is not decent." In the mouth of that peasant the word "decent" covered everything. With a serious and solemn gaiety in which it was not certain whether he was joking or not, he said, "The priest is the only animal that sings when one of its kind dies."

The others laughed complacently and commented, "The comrade is always talking about that."

We went on towards Villafranca de Cordova, having left our woman comrade in the town hall with two or three members of the local committee. They saw that she was slender with a fragile city beauty and asked us if she was from Madrid. When he told them that was so, they looked at each other in a pleased way, and remarked: "Then all the country, up to the capital, is with us, and all is safe."

That comforted them, as we had foreseen. Soon after leaving the town, we met a group of seven riders on fine black ponies. With their flexible loins, sharp profiles, Cordova hats, the butts of the rifles resting on their thighs, and the reins in one hand, these countrymen had a true campaigning grace. They reined in their restless ponies and, in passing, advised us: "When you see Villafranca, go quickly, because you'll see it about a mile off, and that ground is sometimes raked by the fascist guns."

We bore it in mind. The road was bordered by terraces and little hills, and we could not see far ahead or at the sides. There was more dust than on the previous stretch, which the wagons raised, leaving behind them a thick cloud gilded by the sun. The second car followed us at a distance of about two hundred yards and our dust mingled with theirs. We were not farther apart, because we had agreed to keep close together.

Fifty minutes' traveling brought us opposite Villafranca, down in a valley. The road wound down a large hillock. We must have been completely visible to the enemy camp, as their front line was a little less than a mile beyond the town. We hurried and were in the square in a minute. As we stopped, we saw groups of armed peasants running toward the outside of the town to reinforce their comrades. We could hear rifles and machine-guns. We asked what was happening. Nobody took any notice of us.

Ten minutes later the same groups returned, and two peasants of the local committee came to us from them. We told them who we were, and they received us with a kind of friendly surprise. We left with them all the material we had brought from Adamuz: the library, the pamphlets, the reviews, and the placards. One of the chiefs asked us if we had come from Madrid expressly and shook us by the hand. They exchanged pleased glances when we said we had.

We inquired about the alarm, and at that moment the mayor, who had come back, joined the group and told us that we, the missionaries of Cultura Popular, had won a battle without getting out of our cars. We didn't understand. They explained to us.

"The dust raised by the two cars made the enemy think that a strong reinforcing column had arrived. Our people had been attacking the enemy, who after resisting a few minutes retired to other trenches in disorder, leaving behind more than twenty rifles and a machine-gun." We all congratulated ourselves on our good fortune.

They told us that ours was the first help they had received, and that they were hurt because they had not been sent a rifle or a single militiaman.

"But then," we asked, "with what did you fight?"

"We have a few rifles captured from the enemy. Now we have twenty more. But most of the comrades have to use their shotguns. The women and the old men spend the day and part of the night making ammunition. One of the comrades goes regularly round the poultry and game shops in the towns in the neighborhood to buy empty cartridges. We fill them here with home-made bullets. Come and see."

They took us to a large shed in which about twenty women and old men were at work. There was a lighted furnace in the back. With coal and a blacksmith's bellows they raised the temperature to the melting-point of lead. In a corner of the shed nearly two tons of new gas piping were piled up. "These," said a comrade, pointing to them with his hand, "were to bring water to the town, but when we have won, there will be plenty of pipes in the town, don't you think?" Two old men were cutting the lead with axes into lengths, which they threw into the melting-pot. When the lead was melted, they poured it into little molds like thimbles. From these came out, still hot, spherical or cylindrical bullets of the size to fit their guns. Women at the other end of the shed were filling the cartridges and piling them in neat rows in boxes.

"Here at the side," the peasant told us with pride, "they are making dynamite cartridges." They were also making, they told us, powder for bombs with touch-cords. "For a month," they added, "no one here has tasted sugar. We are saving it all to make explosives." There was no need to raise the spirits of the peasants in this village. What they needed was rifles and machine-guns.

We spoke to the peasants from one of the lorries. We confined ourselves to a minute description of the situation on the other fronts so that they could have a general idea of the war. And we explained to them the work of the Popular Front in the organization of agrarian production and wealth, so that they might associate their struggle with social progress.

The democratic revolution controlled by workers and peasants spread its perspectives before that handful of heroes under the increasing rattle of machine-guns. The meeting ended with loud cheers for the republic and for the Popular Front government.

[The preceding account is an excerpt from Ramon Sender's forthcoming book "Counter-Attack in Spain," to be published soon by Houghton Mifflin.]

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Issues and Men

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

ONCE a Tammany man, always a Tammany man. I suppose there was nothing for Senator Wagner to do but to come out for Jeremiah T. Mahoney in the New York mayoralty campaign. He is still a sachem of Tammany Hall, and Mahoney is the regular nominee of that organization. None the less, it makes me sick that a man of his caliber and reputation should strike such a blow at decent government in New York. No wonder that he announced immediately afterward that his health would not permit him to make any more speeches for Mahoney. But it is not his health surely that is in jeopardy; it is his reputation. The Senator has made a great name for himself of late years in Washington, notably in his championship of labor and of progressive social advances. He and Robert La Follette were the first Senators to see, at the beginning of the depression, that there was no way out of voting very large appropriations for relief and public works—billions of dollars when other people were thinking in millions and the cold-hearted Herbert Hoover was setting his face rigidly against any national relief. Mr. Wagner has made his reputation not by exceptional brilliance, or because he is a great orator, which he is not. He has won widespread praise by his enormous industry and by his sound judgment reinforced by his legal knowledge. Few men in the Senate are today more valuable than he, and now he has to turn around and strike himself this bad blow by coming out for Mahoney.

Loyalty is the explanation, of course. He knows that Mahoney isn't as good a man as LaGuardia and that the welfare of the city demands the Mayor's reelection; yet he must stand by Tammany because not only is he an office-holder in the organization, but he owes to it his political rise. Naturally, also, he is interested in the career of his able young son, who has just received a Tammany nomination for the New York State Assembly. Moreover, he can point to the example of Postmaster General Farley and indirectly to that of the President. Mr. Roosevelt knows what Tammany is. People, I find, have forgotten that Franklin Roosevelt made a great reputation for independence and courage in his first term as Senator from Dutchess County when his vote defeated the Buffalo politician, "Blue-eyed Billy" Sheehan, for the United States Senate. Sheehan and his crowd were in cahoots with the Tammany machine. That was over a quarter of a century ago, and Mr. Roosevelt has been a resident of New York City most of the time ever since and knows that Tammany Hall is still what it was, held together, as has been said, by the "cohesive power of public plunder." Yet the President, because he "cannot interfere in local politics," has not spoken out, and his silence places him with Postmaster General Farley on the side of Mahoney.

Still another man has dealt himself a grave blow by coming out for Mahoney. Herbert H. Lehman, Governor of New York, is also among those who have indorsed the Tammany candidate. I have never been a great admirer of Mr. Lehman; he has certainly not been one of those enthusiasms of mine which Henry L. Mencken and others say that I am prone to yield to. But Lehman is also a lifelong resident of New York. He made his fortune as a banker in the city, and he cannot be under any illusions whatsoever as to what Tammany Hall is and what it has always stood for. He has always backed such enterprises as Lillian Wald's Henry Street Settlement and many of our leading charitable undertakings. Unless he is a good deal more limited mentally than I believe him to be, he has certainly known that during his and my lifetime and for generations before that a chief function of private charity in New York has been to mop up after the misgovernment of Tammany Hall, which has dealt out the grossest injustice to the poor people of New York while pretending to befriend them. Yet the Governor has no hesitation in assuring the city that it ought to elect Mr. Mahoney and reinstate Tammany Hall in the district attorney's office and the City Hall and everywhere else. That is something that will not be forgiven, and it ought not to be; it will be a stain upon the Governor's reputation as long as he lives.

The eyes of the country are on the election in New York City. Residents of New York rarely realize how the country watches what is happening here and what an effect our local electoral decisions have elsewhere. This year's election is particularly important because the system of proportional representation has never before been tried on so large a scale. The old question whether a reform administration can succeed itself is also to the front; whether, with a World's Fair coming, New York is to continue the extraordinary progress it has made under Mayor LaGuardia, or whether it will slip back into the hands of what is not a party but an organization which has viewed every political issue from the standpoint of what Tammany can get out of it. Again, many persons loyal to our democracy and institutions are well aware that all the Nazi influence is being brought to bear to defeat Mayor LaGuardia because he has said that Hitler ought to be in a museum of horrors and because the Mayor has some Jewish blood in his veins. All these seem to me compelling reasons why every citizen in New York who believes in decency and fair play and a modern system of government should be enthusiastic for the LaGuardia ticket.

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BOOKS *and the* ARTS

WHAT BOAT?

HARRY HANSEN in his column of October 18 gave us the picture of a Tired Book Reviewer who had suddenly begun throwing books, reviews, and reviewers around his narrow office in a fine fit of disgust with all three. Since he was genuinely annoyed he mentioned names, spoke frankly, and brought up issues—which always makes for good reading.

The occasion of Mr. Hansen's outburst was the publication of Ernest Hemingway's new book and the reviews that greeted it. He was obviously annoyed with the furor created by one man's book. That annoyance is justified, and it is even refreshing that after all these years Mr. Hansen is not yet reconciled to the phenomenon of publishers and reviewers looking desperately for great books in an era when the probability that great books will be written is almost exactly in inverse proportion to the degree of social chaos and instability that prevails.

Mr. Hansen's main point was that "although nobody was wholly satisfied with the Hemingway opus, a considerable softening in censure was to be observed among left-wing writers, who viewed with evident approval the dawn of a social conscience in the great man." There again Mr. Hansen had a point. The tendency of left-wing reviewers to speak softly of the literary faults of well-known and little-known, good or bad writers if they happen to pass the current political tests is of long standing. It reached an all-time high a few years ago in the praise that was heaped on "proletarian novels" which were not expected to pass ordinary literary tests because their characters were workers—even though their authors were presumably writers. It reached a new low only the other day when a left-wing columnist decreed that literary standards were to be suspended in critical considerations of the novels of Robert Briffault because Mr. Briffault, although an anthropologist and past fifty-five, had, through an admirable if belated conversion, turned into a radical and a novelist. In fact, the tendency has become so highly developed that the sensitive observer, by reading the reviews, can follow the factional disputes raging in the radical movement (which unlike cellular life decreases by division) even though he may not be able to find out whether or not a given book is worth reading.

Mr. Hansen, then, had a case; but unfortunately annoyance diluted his logic, and he succeeded only in proving that there are exceptions to every rule and that not all the fallacies are on the left. Having stated his thesis on the "softness" of left-wing reviewers, he went on to say that the "superlative review" of the Hemingway novel appeared in *Time* magazine! Now it is quite likely that the book section of *Time* harbors left-wing reviewers—it is notorious that Time, Inc., runs the best-appointed boarding-house for left-wing writers in the country—but it is highly doubtful that *Time* devoted almost four pages to Hemingway because he has acquired a social conscience. This must be set down to commercial-journalistic rather than left-wing ballyhoo—even though the twain sometimes meet to the extent that a right-wing advertiser does not care if a left-wing book becomes a best-seller. *Time's* comment was "contrasted" with that of Sinclair Lewis (is he right-wing?), whom Mr. Hansen described brightly as the husband of Dorothy Thompson, Inc. (as I have indicated, Mr. Hansen was hitting out that day). The irate reviewer was on safer ground when he cited the comments on Hemingway, past and present, of Malcolm Cowley, but he stepped into another puddle when he approvingly quoted the comments of Clifton Fadiman, who criticized the book severely but can hardly be called right-wing.

At this point the argument shifted to the naughty words of Hemingway and the left-right controversy was more or less abandoned, though the implication was pretty clear that left-wingers like obscenity while respectable reviewers do not. I had thought that obscenity had long since ceased to be an issue for adult reviewers, left, right, or center. But Mr. Hansen cited reviewers who "dodged the gutter talk Hemingway enjoys displaying" and reserved his highest praise for Herschel Brickell. "Disdaining feature writing and literary detours, Brickell looked at the Hemingway opus with the concern of a man whose garden has been disturbed by woodchucks. He said calmly that the book disgusted him." Mr. Hansen also cited J. Donald Adams of the *Times,* who called the novel an empty book (and is known to deplore most four-letter words), but he had by this time wandered so far afield from the left-right issue that it seems hardly worth the trouble to point out that Mr. Adams can qualify as one exhibit to prove that though left-wing reviewers lean over backward to praise books by authors who have acquired a social conscience, it is likewise true that right-wing reviewers lean over forward to dismiss them.

The column of October 18 ended with a remark about *The Nation* that was so irrelevant to the discussion and so clearly an invitation to the writer of these lines that it would be almost impolite to ignore it. It happened that *The Nation's* review of the Hemingway novel did not appear on the date of publication (it came out six days later). That should have pleased Mr. Hansen, since one of the sources of his annoyance was that the whole reviewing world erupted at once just because Hemingway had published a book. Instead he wrote as follows: "Apparently the only reviewing medium to miss the boat was *The Nation,* which only a few seasons ago polished off all the journeymen reviewers for not knowing their trade." Mr. Hansen was no doubt referring to the series on Our Critics, Right or Wrong, which appeared

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in these pages two years ago. I had not intended to revert to the subject, but as one who took part in that polishing off I must testify that our criticism of the journeymen reviewers was *not* that they failed to review the current "great books" on time. It is possible, of course, that Mr. Hansen had other aspects of that series in mind. Meanwhile his irrelevant remark reminds me, irrelevantly perhaps, of a picture which appeared in *Punch* some years ago. It showed an average Britisher, slightly tight in honor of bank holiday, standing in the middle of a street-car track. He was shaking his fist at an oncoming street-car and shouting: "And another thing . . . quit following me around!"

MARGARET MARSHALL

On Race-Thinking

RACE: A STUDY IN MODERN SUPERSTITION. By Jacques Barzun. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.50.

PRIMITIVE INTELLIGENCE AND ENVIRONMENT. By S. D. Porteus. The Macmillan Company. $3.

MR. BARZUN'S volume is one of the most original books about race I have read in many years and must be given a place in the front rank of studies of what he so aptly terms "race-thinking." Entirely fresh in its approach to the subject, it thrusts far beneath the surface of recent developments in the political and social manipulations of prejudice and gives its reader much insight into the background of the sinister current tendency to exploit those differences between human groups, real or fancied, to which the term "race" is usually applied.

His book is remarkable from another point of view. Those of us who are professionally concerned with the study of physical types and the relation of physical form to social behavior are all agreed that our subject presents many pitfalls for those who attempt to work in it without requisite training. But now comes Mr. Barzun, whose approach is entirely that of the historian of culture—that is, whose techniques are in no wise those of the anthropologist—and not only avoids the usual blunders but from the vantage-point of his historical position attains a new and revealing perspective on the development of interest in race and racial differences.

Mr. Barzun modestly states that his reason for publishing this book "was the repeated experience . . . of being in possession of facts that seemed to be overlooked in the arguments both for and against race beliefs and in the history of modern race prejudice." The work is essentially an exposition of the place taken by the concept of race in the development of European thought during the past century. Its critical theme, against which all the historic factors are projected, is the correct assumption that the physical type of a group can be the result of but one kind of force, the personal genetic composition of the individuals who compose that group. This, of course, leads to a corollary—that only in so far as groups of individuals are genetically related are their outward resemblances significant. And this, taken with the point of the great variation found within any group designated by the term "race," cuts under the foundation of all popular and much scientific use of the term. Yet this use persists, and "the race question [has become] . . . a mode of thinking so intertwined with the culture of modern Europe as to constitute an ingrained superstition." The author's task is to show how this superstition, fed by the products of honest but misdirected minds and employed for nationalistic ends and group advantages, has developed into the nightmare it has come to be.

Though the argument is based on the author's special knowledge of the French scene, it is sufficiently documented from British and German sources not to appear one-sided. The book begins with a discussion of the Nordic myth and of the manner in which the young science of anthropology was brought into controversies about the social significance of differences in physical form. The following chapter on Gobineau, under whose influence racialism was given its greatest impetus, is noteworthy for its judicious appraisal of his thought. Concepts of race as applied to the arts and as they have affected the international political scene, their development as a part of "scientific anthropology," and, finally, an exposure of the assumptions underlying racialism of any stripe constitute the body of the book. It is indicative of the grasp Mr. Barzun has of his subject that one of the most significant and yet most neglected contributions to the study of the mechanisms which operate in the formation of human physical types—Boas's research into the family lines that constitute a population—is made the point of emphasis on which the book ends.

The second book listed at the head of this review is a perfect exemplification of the obscurity of thought about race stressed by Mr. Barzun, though Dr. Porteus is concerned with an aspect of the subject not treated in the other book, namely, psychological testing. When one considers the looseness with which this writer employs the term and the utter trustfulness of his "racial thinking" as shown in his acceptance of the proposition that something called race is a determining factor in the behavior of the folk he has gone to the ends of the earth to visit, one cannot but wish that this other tragi-comedy in the history of science, the testing of "racial intelligence," might be studied by Mr. Barzun.

This book by Dr. Porteus is really an anachronism, for the use of psychological tests to determine "general intelligence" has been almost universally repudiated as scientifically unworkable. The twist he gives the customary argument is ingenious but unconvincing. Granted, says he, that intelligence tests do not tell the entire story, then let us go where the natural environment is severe, and experiment with two groups to see which makes the highest score in tests that do not necessitate much use of language. Obviously, it takes intelligence to meet the demands of any natural environment; if the people who live in what one believes to be the more difficult environment make scores as good as or better than the other group, it may be held that the former are the more intelligent. Hence the conclusion that Bushmen are less intelligent than Australian aborigines, who in turn are less intelligent than Kaffirs.

All this neglects the ever-present historical factor of culture, of tradition, which, though it may be said to be but the expression of the intelligence of the people who carry it, nevertheless is coming more and more to be recognized by psychologists as the most significant determinant in behavior. In any event these "races" are merely local groupings which, genetically, are but aggregates of individuals, of family lines. And so we come again to Mr. Barzun's book, which, though it does not have the interest of Dr. Porteus's casual travel notes, is more stimulating than a dozen works which follow a line now almost entirely discredited.

MELVILLE J. HERSKOVITS

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A Modern Woman

THE FAITHFUL WIFE. By Sigrid Undset. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

THINKING back over Sigrid Undset's various books one realizes anew how completely this novelist has analyzed women. The Norwegian background of her novels has at times been filled in so richly as to obscure the precision and authenticity of her portraits of the feminine mind. Mrs. Undset has progressed from studies of women frustrated and unable to analyze their own destroying passions to studies of women more modern and more intellectually aware of their own motivation. In this book, as in "Ida Elizabeth," is a study of marriage, a very careful and subtle analysis of a modern woman functioning intelligently in an emotional crisis. The story has to do with a childless marriage of sixteen years' standing, apparently happy, but easily broken by a man's confused desire to make some woman totally dependent upon him.

Opening with a richly and humorously drawn picture of marital happiness, the book reaches its climax when Nathalie, the wife, finds her husband is to have a child by a young girl from his own country; it resumes its quieter movement in the last chapters, in which the wife rebuilds her own and her divorced husband's stability. Though the circumstances through which husband and wife meet again as wiser people might in the hands of a lesser artist seem managed, here all has been so motivated that the end is artistically correct. It is psychologically correct also to have the husband turn to a rather childish religious faith and the wife rely on her own strength.

Lovely pictures of the country, skilful mingling of the commonplaces of daily living with sketches of the finer human feelings, the continuous movement of the narrative, and the subtle psychological analysis prove Mrs. Undset again one of the fine novelists. Of course the book carries a message, though in no narrow sense of the word. The curious separation that develops as husband and wife spend their energies on different professions and the difficulties in a business woman's life are taken into account. In the end the wife allows the husband to rearrange the pattern of their lives, but she remains, nevertheless, the stronger character. The emotional dependency of women upon love is strongly stressed.

Mrs. Undset is examining her own times. Nathalie has been educated by parents with the progressive ideas of the late nineteenth century. She herself seems very much of our own century. For the rest, this novel has the charm of all Mrs. Undset's books, peopled, as they are, with lively characters and presenting always a whole life. EDA LOU WALTON

Economics in Transition

THE WORLD'S WEALTH: ITS USE AND ABUSE. By Broadus Mitchell. Henry Holt and Company. $4.

THE problem of how to start learning economics is becoming more and more difficult. Twenty-five years ago the classical doctrine as revised and extended by such thinkers as Marshall and Böhm-Bawerk, had attained general acceptance in the academic world. Furthermore it had been admirably and painstakingly reduced to textbook form by such eminent teachers as Professor Taussig. The problem of what to learn and how to set about it was easily solved.

Three things have changed all that. The first was the attempt, first undertaken by the members of the Cambridge (England) school, to straighten out certain serious logical flaws in the Marshallian structure which centered about the so-called theory of increasing returns. This path led Mr. Sraffa, of Cambridge, to conclude in 1926 that it was necessary to drop, *as a general assumption*, the hypothesis of pure competition. (Note that an examination of facts had led many observers to this conclusion long before; facts, however, reflect themselves in "pure" economics only in a peculiar backhanded way, as this example shows.) With that, the literature on imperfect competition was born. The infant has grown rapidly ever since.

The second factor has a somewhat more complex history. Monetary theory, which had reached a high degree of development in England during the Napoleonic Wars and in the controversy leading up to the Bank Act of 1844, fell on bad days in the last half of the nineteenth century—so much so that the "discovery" of the quantity theory of money was considered a great advance. Certain Swedish and Austrian economists, however, began around the turn of the century to move toward a new conception of monetary theory as an integral part of general economic theory. This stream of thought found its belated way into the Anglo-Saxon world through J. M. Keynes, whose brilliant mind, profoundly disturbed by the post-war monetary chaos, had already begun to move in somewhat similar channels. Keynes's "Treatise on Money" (1930) marked the beginning of the end of the old monetary theory; his "General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money" (1936) lifts bourgeois economics to a new plane and gives it a new lease on life.

The third factor is the most difficult of all to explain because it is so little realized even by the most progressive economists trained in the academic tradition. That it exists, however, is proved by the remarkable revival of interest in Marx even in bourgeois circles. Marx is no longer regarded altogether as the benighted inventor of a crazy theory of value. His true aim—"to lay bare the economic law of motion of modern society"—is gradually coming to be considered a legitimate and even necessary task of the economist. In the light of this aim, Marx's work takes on a new value. He who would work on a theory of economic development can scarcely avoid being influenced by the greatest theorist in this field.

Thus economics is at present in a period of rapid transition in which received doctrine is likely to be roughly dealt with and new ideas eagerly seized upon and hotly fought over. It is, naturally, no easy task to know how to train the neophyte to take an active part in the fray or even, for that matter, to get a ringside seat from which he can watch the fun. For this reason a new textbook in economics, especially if it is written by such a well-known progressive as Professor Mitchell, raises high hopes. And for the same reason one must report a disappointment more profound than the quality of Professor Mitchell's book would ordinarily warrant. If "The World's Wealth" had been written two or three decades ago, it would have been possible to call it a good text with only a few minor reservations. But it is disturbing today to find in it very little—except, of course, the factual material—which *wasn't* written two or three decades ago. Not all that Professor Mitchell says is in Taussig's "Principles," but of economic theory proper very little is missing. Supply and demand (under competitive conditions), the quantity theory of money, the Ricardian theory of rent, the Austrian theory of interest, and a lot more are all to be found in their proper places. In some respects, however, Professor Mitchell bears a great likeness to some of the pre-war German Social Democrats. No Anglo-Saxon economist of a few years back could have possibly looked with such favor upon the

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rapid growth of monopoly as Professor Mitchell does; but the Social Democrats could, and on the same grounds. It leads to stability and security, says Professor Mitchell. It would seem incumbent upon anyone holding such views today at least to indicate in a rough way what is the matter with all the literature written during the last few years which purports to prove theoretically that monopolistic rigidities are greatly accentuating the insecurity and instability of the capitalist system as a whole.

Professor Mitchell's book does not help the aspiring student to understand any one of the three new developments mentioned earlier in this review. Consequently anyone interested in these matters, as the present reviewer is and believes many present-day beginners to be, can only put the book aside and wait impatiently for the next attempt to fill the gap in our pedagogical equipment. PAUL M. SWEEZY

Gentle Arapesh

EAST GOES WEST. THE MAKING OF AN ORIENTAL YANKEE. By Younghill Kang. Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.75.

"YES, we played at governing Korea in the old way known to our fathers. As to the Japanese, they were not represented in these games of ours." Younghill Kang has previously related his childhood ambitions and their destruction. While "The Grass Roof" gave us a distinguished study of the Korean social pattern from the merchant to the venerated scholar, it was more than the record of a comparatively little-known culture. It was an unusually fresh narrative of human affairs. The daily activities of Korean village life, the serene order of a Confucian education, the struggles of the earnest Christian missionaries to bring civilization to this ancient and subtle society—these things Younghill Kang made vivid to Western eyes in his earlier book.

In 1854 Commodore Perry opened by force the harbors of Japan to Western commerce. In 1910 the Japanese, eager disciples of the new learning, brought to a close forty-two centuries of Korean independence. And seeing his Confucian society crumble, the life of thought falling before that of action, Kang fled from his native land. "East Goes West" continues the story of Kang's education in that Western science and ethics which had destroyed his home. Here is the account of the American apprenticeship of this ambitious, precocious, and engaging Korean youth, this learned wanderer who traveled the three hundred miles to Seoul on thirty cents, who experienced prison and punishment for his participation in the Korean (pacifist) rebellion of 1919, and whose extraordinary knowledge of Confucian classic poetry was for a time his sole asset in the New World.

It is a good story. Kang carries over to this present book his vitality, his capacity for adventure, his talent for describing the surface patterns of people and for discovering their inner meanings. He gives us sharp analyses of our sermons on profitable service, department-store routines, social panaceas, and educational formulas. We share his excitement over his first contacts with our materialistic triumphs. But while "East Goes West" is a valuable addition to our record of emigrant stories, it is after all a less impressive book than "The Grass Roof." Younghill Kang has survived a harsh apprenticeship, he has learned, with some fine comic flourishes, to sell himself to this Western society, but he has not yet learned to give his affections to it. Though he no longer lives in the past like Kim, the Korean ghost of his book, he is still the expatriate, and not merely from another country but from another basic culture. He is still the gentle Arapesh, and now among the barbaric Mundugumor. Because of this his work has gained in ironic power, in intellectual preoccupation, in a sense of farce. But farce may be used to cover frustration. And Younghill Kang has lost, for the moment at least, the distinguishing trait of his earlier period, a friendship at once discerning and indulgent for the land and the life around him.

MAXWELL GEISMAR

Newtonian Cosmology

WAR WITH THE NEWTS. By Karel Capek. Translated by M. and R. Weatherall. G. P. Putnam's Sons. $2.50.

IT IS hard to see, after this book, how the Nobel Prize Committee can go on ignoring Karel Capek. He is not, perhaps, a very serious writer, but he is a highly serious pacifist. Furthermore, in spite of all temptations to belong to other nations, he remains a Czecho-Slovakian, the leading man of letters in the fatherland of Huss and Masaryk and Skoda. Add to these claims his contributions to science and technology—not, to be sure, any discoveries or inventions but something more fundamental which obviates the future necessity of anyone's bothering to make discoveries or develop inventions. Capek's first play will be remembered for forcing the word "robot" upon most Indo-European languages, as well as a few Finno-Ugrian. Since then he has conducted investigations in entomology and longevity before large audiences, and has devoted the better part of several novels to shattering atoms and prejudices. But Capek has never been content with mere cosmic exploits and utopian prophecies. He has passed from pseudo-science to satire, through the universe of Jules Verne and H. G. Wells to the world of Anatole France and Aldous Huxley.

The present planet, intimately as we know it from the papers and the movies and the radio, is wide enough to serve as a stage for Capek's latest satire. Out of the chorus of created things he has picked a most unpromising species of amphibian to make good under the spotlight. Of the industry and versatility of the newts we are given ample proof; they work almost too hard for their author and manage to cover every conceivable subject. But their main function is not to act out a beast-fable of their own but to provide humanity with a series of crises, and thus to play their part in the allegory of imperialistic exploitation, mass production, and related issues. The introductory section of the book is the chronicle of an extraordinary voyage from the seacoast of Bohemia, full of unnatural natural history. The final section embodies the apocalypse for which Capek has saved up all his fireworks. But the core of the satire discards fantasy for irony, and the middle section is a record of cultural conflicts between the newts and ourselves. It is surprising how few lies Capek needs to tell, and how plausibly his story proceeds *ex hypothesi*, once we have accepted his initial whoppers.

Satire is, by definition, a mixed mode. The narrative assimilates a variety of genres and points of view; it is now a Reuter dispatch and again a League of Nations communiqúe, occasionally a terse English law report and often a wordy German treatise. It may be inferred, even without a knowledge of Czech, that Capek's style is tricky, inclining to neologism and offering resistance to translators. This translation, obviously aimed at both English and American readers, is written in no language at all; Indian corn is constantly referred to as "maize," but elderly professors are in the habit

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of exclaiming "My gosh!" A revue, however, should be judged by its total effect. If the black-outs are fast enough, they need not be too cogent. If the ensembles are colorful, no one expects them to be anything further.

HARRY LEVIN

Early Days on the Plains

THE SOD-HOUSE FRONTIER, 1854-1890. By Everett Dick. D. Appleton-Century Company. $5.

THIS informative and absorbingly interesting book furnishes a chapter in the history of the nation that everyone should know—a chapter that has not before been treated with such breadth of scope and fullness of detail. It tells the heroic saga of the home-seekers who poured into the plains country after the opening of Kansas and Nebraska—and later the Dakotas—to settlement. Most of them were poorly equipped for the struggle; many died under the strain; and many, utterly discouraged, made their way back to the East. The bravest and most adaptable remained, and with fresh recruits yearly carried on the work until the prairie had been transformed.

These pioneers had first to make sure of their land. Defective land laws permitted every kind of rascality in the seizing and holding of home sites; and though the hastily formed "claim clubs" often protected the bona fide settler, they were not infrequently controlled by rascals who protected only their own interests. Once settled, the newcomers found themselves contending with a nature that seemed determined to thwart all their efforts. They could find no timber except the thin strips along the streams, and so they made their homes in dugouts excavated from hillsides or in cabins constructed of sod. They had little or no fuel except hay; they endured floods, blizzards, heavy snowstorms, prairie fires, long spells of drought, and periods of intense heat. Plagues of grasshoppers spread ruin over immense areas. It would be difficult to exaggerate the great visitation of 1874. The present reviewer, then a schoolboy in Columbus, Kansas, is unlikely to forget the living cloud that descended upon the town, transforming in a few minutes—so it will always seem to him—every garden into a bare patch of soil.

There was a lighter side to the picture. In the midst of hardships the first settlers found time for whatever pleasures were available. Dancing, even though done in bare feet, was a passion, and all took part. There were family visits, spelling bees, house-raising bees, feasts—so, at least, they were called even in times when food was scarce—and later all the games known in the East. The reader will find every phase of this frontier life pictured here.

A regrettable carelessness is shown in a number of matters. The diction is not all that it should be, and the account of the battle of the Arickaree in September, 1868, could have been better told. Major George Alexander Forsyth appears as Forsythe, the scout Simpson Everett ("Jack") Stillwell as Stillwell, and his companion Trudeau as Trudell. The statement that the Indians lost "between seven and eight hundred braves" is an amusing exaggeration. There were probably not that many Indians in the fight. Forsyth, in a dispatch from the field, gave the number killed as about thirty-five, though some years later he wrote that the Indians themselves admitted a loss of seventy-five.

It is no pleasure to point out these slips in so meritorious a work; but the general reader will probably be too engrossed with the narrative to notice them.

W. J. GHENT

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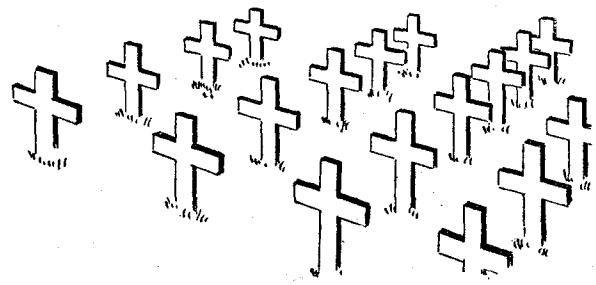

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DRAMA

Whodunit

FOR some reason or other the popular theater has never succeeded in devising for itself any real equivalent of the detective story. The best examples of the latter—so at least I am told—carry logical ingenuity to a point where it becomes its own justification and achieve real excellence as puzzles if not as literature. They are said to furnish the favorite recreation of great minds, and they certainly achieve a popularity which proves either that the group of great minds is larger than other available evidence would lead one to suppose or that their appeal is not exclusively to mighty intellects in a state of fatigue. Something of the sort, it would seem, would be equally popular in the theater, but I can think of no play which ever successfully attempted quite that thing. We have had "crook plays" in great number, and we have had, besides, both satires like "The Tavern" or "Seven Keys to Baldpate" and many examples of the half-serious genre which *Variety* some years ago christened the "Whodunit." There have even been plays like last year's "Night Must Fall" and "Love from a Stranger," whose aim was to build up a sense of horror on the basis of abnormal psychology. But in none of these is the solution of a problem by logical deduction the real subject. In most cases, indeed, the explanation is hurried over in a few sentences at the end and is so completely perfunctory as to constitute a confession that it is considered of very little importance.

I wish that George Abbott, certainly our most skilful manipulator of melodrama, would sometime attempt a really logical crime story, but the only relevance of the above remark to his production of "Angel Island" (National Theater) is that he has not done anything of the sort. What he has given us instead is pretty strictly in the accepted tradition of the Whodunit, with no variations that are more than unmistakably minor. There is comic relief, furnished chiefly by a parlor maid bent on bestowing her person upon the most desperately pressed of the characters involved, but the wild and woolly action of the main plot is presented with ostensible seriousness. Two persons are murdered, but there are motives sufficient to account for the slaughter of the entire cast, and villainy of all sorts is rampant on the island estate upon which a very choice collection of swindlers, gigolos, and designing women has been conveniently marooned by a storm cutting off all communication with the mainland. Everybody is plotting against everybody else, and one of the climaxes comes when all of the half-dozen couples, each of which has sneaked down in the dark for its own nefarious purpose and then hidden at the approach of the next, are finally compelled to reveal themselves to one another and to discover that the entire company is engaged in spying upon itself. The chief, and not very exalted, purpose is to win from the audience shrieks of surprise which the audience itself does not take very seriously. In other words, the function of "Angel Island" is to purge the soul through gasp and giggle. The play got a very mixed reception from the press, but my guess is that audiences will like it, and though the intellectual level is well below that of Edgar Wallace I must confess that I liked it too.

The Abbey Players, making one of their frequent and welcome visits, have on their repertory such standard plays as "The Plow and the Stars" and "The Playboy of the Western World." It was, however, my luck to see them in Lennox Robinson's "The Far-off Hills" (Ambassador Theater), which serves for little except to remind us that even a drama rooted in a folk as the modern Irish drama is supposed to be can turn into something pretty conventional and pretty feeble. It is acted with considerable skill, and it may have some surface truth to manners, but it is feeble in conception and worked out by means of a series of clichés about as well worn as any the theater knows. There is a priggish girl who yields when a masterful man comes along, there are two flappers who plan gorgeous romances for themselves, and there is even a comic servant who changes beaux in each act. If "The Far-off Hills" (moral: they always look greenest) is serious folk art, then so is "Abie's Irish Rose."

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

RECORDS

VICTOR has issued under its own label Volume III of H. M. V.'s Sibelius Society. Of the seven records ($14) three are devoted to the rarely played Sixth Symphony, which is one of the best in the way that Sibelius's music is good when it is good; there are, here again, the feeling for musical sound, the ability to work it to superb effect; and the sound itself is attractive and enjoyable. In the String Quartet "Voces Intimae," on the remaining four records, the skill in construction is applied for the most part to material which hasn't for me the significance it undoubtedly has for certain others. Performances—by the Finnish National Orchestra under Schneevoigt, and the Budapest String Quartet—are first-rate, and recording is excellent; highly regrettable is Victor's omission of the analytical notes by Ernest Newman that accompanied the original H. M. V. set.

On five records ($7.50) Victor also has issued a number of songs by Stephen Foster, some of them less well known than others, but all of them charming. They are beautifully sung by Richard Crooks, but in some instances his fine voice is coarsened by the recording.

That unmitigated nuisance, the loose residue in Columbia's surfaces, obscures at first the excellence of performance and recording in the new set of Beethoven's Second Symphony made by Beecham with the London Philharmonic (four records, $6). For the same reason Maurice Evans's sibilants disappear and the quality of his voice changes in the first playings of Columbia's records of passages from "Richard II"—later playings disclosing reproduction of Evans's beautiful delivery of the lines (five records, $10). Not surfaces, however, but poor recording is wrong with Columbia's two records ($3) of Mozart's Piano Sonata in B flat (K. 570) played by Gieseking. And not recording but the playing of the Pro Arte String Quartet is wrong with Victor's set of Mozart's String Quintet in D (K. 593) (three records, $6.50). The poignancy and dramatic intensity of the slow movement—so like the slow introduction to the finale of the Quintet in G minor—can be realized in the Adagio pace prescribed by Mozart but not in the Andante con moto adopted by the Pro Arte group; and this is not to consider the technical inadequacies of the playing in other movements.

The Pro Arte Quartet is excellent in modern works like Rieti's Quartet in F (Victor: two records, $3); unfortu-

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nately, Rieti's Quartet isn't worth the trouble. I feel the same way about Szymanowski's Notturno and Tarantelle, played by Menuhin ($2), and Bach's French Suite No. 6, played by Landowska ($2). Marian Anderson is not at her best in her record ($2) of Schubert's "Ave Maria" and "Aufenthalt"; Coppola's record ($1.50) of transcriptions of Debussy's "L'Ile Joyeuse" and "La Soirée dans Granade" is bad; and the record ($2) of the Bach-Caillet Prelude and Fugue in F minor made by Ormandy with the Philadelphia Orchestra sounds as though Stokowski had made the transcription and conducted the performance—which means that I do not like it. On the other hand Graener's three songs are pleasant and Gerhard Hüsch's singing of them is a joy ($1); there is wry-sounding humor of the early twenties in William Walton's "Façade," which he conducts with the London Philharmonic (two records, $3); and Gluck's Overture to "Alceste" and Weber's to "Euryanthe" are well performed by the B.B.C. Symphony under Boult ($1.50 each).

B. H. HAGGIN

FILMS

The Poetry of Erosion

FEW citizens of the United States can be ignorant of the fact that their present government is interested in the soil the continent is losing—in the Far West by wind, in the Middle West by rain. Lectures, pamphlets, and newspaper stories, clearly inspired from Washington, have dinned even into metropolitan ears the news that a desert is piling up where grass once grew and that tons of top soil slide daily into the Gulf of Mexico. But the cream of this literature, or rather its poetry, is to be found in two films written and directed by Pare Lorentz for the Farm Security Administration (formerly the Resettlement Administration) of the Department of Agriculture. The first of these films, "The Plow That Broke the Plains," had something of a struggle year before last against the widely circulated notion that it was propaganda, which of course it was. Meanwhile, however, it has managed to get itself shown in fifty-five hundred commercial movie houses and in as many more schools, clubs, and colleges. It was and is an extraordinarily successful work of cinematic art. And its successor, "The River," is even more so. Politics aside, "The River" deserves to sweep the country and I think it will.

Its technique is so similar to that of "The Plow" as to yield its secret now quite simply. The spectator is attacked on three sides simultaneously. He sees pictures, he hears music (by Virgil Thomson), and a certain incantation of words moves on his mind. Any one of these things by itself would be incomplete, perhaps unintelligible; and any two of them without the third would still leave something to be desired. The three of them accomplish an enormous result in thirty minutes: they recite the physical history of the Mississippi Valley, they analyze its economic geography, they expose in full the tragedy of its waste, they announce a program whereby its wealth can be restored, and they do all this in a rhythm which is irresistible, exciting, and—however sophisticated its source—transparent. The camera has gone to the Rocky Mountains and the slopes of the Alleghenies; to the little, the middle-sized, and the big tributaries of The River and then to The River itself; to cotton fields, to deforested areas,

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I think that this book deserves to be widely read, widely discussed. Without doubt, it will be one of the most challenging books of the present publishing season. —JAMES T FARRELL

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MEXICO'S BLOODLESS REVOLUTION

by Selden Rodman

Illustrated by Diego Rivera

IN THE NOVEMBER COMMON SENSE. A 6000-word study of the amazing successes and impending dilemmas of the Cardenas regime by the Editor of *Common Sense*, just returned from a trip during which he interviewed high Mexican officials and the American Ambassador, travelled widely and spent several hours with Leon Trotsky. The declining power of the army and the coming struggle between labor and peasants are discussed in the light of such questions as: Is Mexico a Totalitarian State? Why is General Cedillo still at large? When will America Intervene? and Why trains are always late. . . .

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to steel mills, to bridges, to paddle-wheels and packets; to gullied fields and the shanties of share-croppers; to cut-over mountains where a drop of water at the end of a spring icicle grows through years into a flood of water that carries the tillable surface down and away; to desolate patches of clay wherein CCC boys drop pine and walnut seedlings; and last, of course, to the great Tennessee River dams, which suggest that a new start can be made. Mr. Thomson's music meanwhile ranges with variations over the universe of our folk music. And meanwhile, too, the voice of Thomas Chalmers has been saying a poem—it may as well be called that—which Pare Lorentz wrote for the purpose:

> Down the Yellowstone, the Milk, the White and Cheyenne;
> The Cannonball, the Musselshell, the James, and the Sioux;
> Down the Judith, the Grand, the Osage, and the Platte,
> The Skunk, the Salt, the Black, and Minnesota. . . .

So on down dozens of names and through hundreds of ideas, all of them chanting at us while we hear and see two-thirds of America on the move. The vastness of the theme, the speed and brevity with which it is handled, and the apparent lightness—these in their combination achieve an effect as moving as anything I can remember. Politics aside, the United States government is one of our most brilliant producers.

"Stage Door" (RKO-Radio), wittily written by Morrie Ryskind and Anthony Veiller, wittily directed by Gregory La Cava, and wittily played by Ginger Rogers, Katharine Hepburn, Adolphe Menjou, and others, is not only very different from the play of the same name by George S. Kaufman and Edna Ferber but obviously superior to it. It is one of the pleasantest entertainments now on view. But the accident of its opening roughly at the same time with "Club des Femmes" (Fifty-fifth Street Playhouse), a French film on a similar theme, together with the further accident of my having seen in the same week with both of them a 1932 film called "Virtue" (Columbia), arouses me to make some remarks on the subject of censorship. "Club des Femmes" has suffered at the last moment some cuttings and tinkerings which are perhaps ridiculous rather than vicious since they do not obscure the original quality of the whole. The story, briefly, is of a Parisian home for young working women, a home which "protects" them from men a little more than they wish to be protected; more at any rate than one of them does, since she smuggles her boy friend into her room one night and in good time becomes a mother. Jacques Deval has handled the episode with charming taste; but the New York censors have vulgarized it with mendacious subtitles assuring those who cannot understand French that the boy and girl are married, though how even a deaf mute could believe this I cannot guess. Such damage, in other words, is superficial. A graver kind of damage is being done all American films through the fear of General Hays, Inc., lest his native public grow up. I perceived as much rather vaguely while I watched the Menjou-Rogers scenes in "Stage Door," scenes which were ambiguous because somebody, or rather everybody, had been afraid to make it clear just what was happening to Ginger's character, or whether anything was. But my perceptions were sharpened by "Virtue," which shows how even in five years a glaze of foolish innocence has formed over our screen. "Virtue" was direct and strong as no film can be today, and in its thoroughgoing fashion it was wholesome, whether or not it dealt with the lives of prostitutes. We might sacrifice our present safety for at least one such film a year. It would do us good, and it would keep the art as healthy as a sound apple. Most of it now is odorless, being artificial fruit.

MARK VAN DOREN

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Letters to the Editors

Return to "Normalcy"

Dear Sirs: Underlying the recent stock-market slump is one important factor deserving of attention which was omitted by Harland H. Allen from his article The Slump in Wall Street, in *The Nation* of October 16. As Mr. Allen says, there has unquestionably been a conspiracy on the part of bankers and professional speculators to bring the market down and thus discredit the Securities and Exchange Commission and other New Deal agencies that make impossible huge, lucrative markets. Wall Street has been preparing for the Congressional elections of next year.

But such sabotage alone could not create the great market crisis which developed on October 18 and 19. The controlling factor underlying the decline seems to me to be the government's curtailment of the PWA and WPA programs, which has reduced popular purchasing power and confronts business men with the possibility of a shrinking market. Aside from the government's expressed hostility to high commodity prices this spring, of which Mr. Allen takes note, the only new development in the present economic situation is the curtailment of government "spending" and President Roosevelt's obviously sincere promise to take the government "out of business." Even the President does not realize apparently that the country cannot go back without going back to 1929-33.

When Mr. Allen wrote that he did not "subscribe to the current fears of a new depression," he wrote without the experience of October 18 and 19. It should now be obvious that a major financial and economic crisis once again confronts the nation and that only stern measures by the government will prevent a repetition of 1929-33. But the steps to be taken should have nothing to do with a "liberalization" of the Securities and Exchange Act, as demanded by Winthrop W. Aldrich of the Chase National Bank and other personally interested parties. The Securities and Exchange Commission has only a superficial relation to the present emergency. The measures now obviously required are a return of the unemployed to government work and relief rolls, a tremendous acceleration of government housing, slum clearance, irrigation, land reclamation, reforestation, and general construction programs, and an increase in income, gift, and inheritance tax rates with a view to paying for expenses as they are incurred.

The most disturbing feature of Mr. Allen's article, to my mind, was his implication that the stock market does not provide a reliable guide to the general economic situation. When the market acts as it did on October 18 and 19, on the heels of a prolonged decline, it means more than that bankers and brokers are angry about government regulation. In 1929 we also heard that the stock market was separate and apart from the business situation, which was statistically good until the end of the year and which continued to produce big dividend announcements even as stocks fell.

Whether the authorities are willing to admit it or not, the private-profit system, grown too complex for any private agency to cope with, is demonstrating anew that it must be transformed at the very least into a semi-collectivized economy. Perhaps the most discouraging feature of the recent "recovery" period from the point of view of the general welfare has been the resumption of big dividend payments, which Mr. Allen mentions with approval. The corporation reports of the last four years show that the big players have once again "won all the marbles."

The situation is extremely ironical. As long as President Roosevelt was introducing measures that presaged collectivism achieved by gradual steps, the economic situation improved; but as soon as he began heeding advice to return to "normalcy," the situation became highly critical. Unless the government enlarges its sphere of economic activity once again and makes serious provision for paying its way, the country will be in worse condition than it ever was before.

FERDINAND LUNDBERG

New York, October 20

British Workers' Dilemma

Dear Sirs: In your issue of October 2 Professor Laski strongly disapproves of the support given by British Labor to the arms program because this means "that there can be no industrial action which will interfere with its completion." I wonder what "industrial action" would be possible if Great Britain, by disarming, helped to establish the domination of the world by the Nazis. I am rather surprised that Professor Laski does not realize the grave danger that threatens not only democracy but all human civilization if sane nations hesitate to put the strait-jacket on megalomaniacs who are preparing to set the world aflame. It may be true that capitalist governments wage war only to defend capitalist interests, but in a world where fascism had the upper hand what chance would the workers have to defend their own interests?

It is possible—Professor Laski thinks highly probable—that capitalism in Britain would not refrain from using fascist methods if a Labor majority seriously started to put into effect a Socialist program. Meanwhile, however, Professor Laski appears to underrate the value of the slight difference between capitalist Great Britain of today, where he is allowed to speak and write as he likes, and an undefended Great Britain overrun by Nazis, where he very soon could meditate in a concentration camp over the strange outcome of an uncompromising Socialist policy.

Budapest, October 5 R. VAMBERY

Socialists Not Wanted

Dear Sirs: Out here in the sticks I am forcibly reminded that the intolerance in the world is not all of a religious or racial character. It can also be directed against the man who "writes pieces for the paper." While seeking a job, and desperately in need of one, I recently came to realize that I was receiving the "run-around." A certain job—a sales position with a manufacturing concern—actually existed. Moreover, it was "down my alley." My application had been received with more encouragement than sales managers ordinarily permit themselves to show. I was given every reason to believe that when references had been checked I could take over the job. "Come back in ten days."

Ten days later I returned. The sales manager sent out word from a conference that there had been "no further developments" but that I "might call later." It was a message carrying a familiar ring, but nevertheless at the end of ten days I returned. Again, he was very busy. After two weeks of waiting I called and demanded a private inter-

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view. Reminding him that he had gone to the trouble of looking up my references, I asked for a frank statement. He hesitated and then answered, "All right, I'll be frank with you. We find that you are absolutely O.K. except for one thing; you are a Socialist, and in our organization that is one thing we will not stand for." Naturally, I told him that my political faith was my own affair and asked to be informed as to its connection with my ability to sell goods. He admitted that there was no connection and then said that his company was not interested in the political views of its employees "as long as they keep them to themselves." In other words, don't write letters to the editor!

October 6 B. L. C.

Italy's Disgrace

Dear Sirs: Since Japan attacked Manchuria with a minimum of opposition from Great Britain, observance of international law has been continually on the decrease. Now, with the renewed Japanese attack on China, the full horror of the situation thus created is beginning to be appreciated by some of those responsible for it. But the conquest of Abyssinia remains, in many respects, the most flagrant act of piracy ever committed.

More than a year ago Oswald Garrison Villard wrote in his column: "Today and for as long as history is written and man turns its pages, the record will be there of Italy's crime and disgrace." There is, however, a very real danger that, preoccupied with China and Spain, the free peoples of the world may neglect to prevent their governments from recognizing the Italian annexation.

Human beings, cattle, crops, and even the water were sprayed with poison gas in Abyssinia. Hospitals were bombed; refugees were machine-gunned from the air. In the attack Italy broke seven solemn treaties. Whosoever condoned that would bring on himself disgrace as great as Italy's.

The Abyssinia Association, of which Norman Angell is one of the presidents, would welcome as members any readers of *The Nation* who subscribe to its views, not only because the larger its membership, the greater its authority, but also because having no subsidy it is dependent on the generosity of its members. Its address is 144 Grand Buildings, Trafalgar Square, London, W.C. 2.

F. BEAUFORT-PALMER,
Honorary Secretary

London, October 12

Terror in Old Cremona

Dear Sirs: Cremona is known to music lovers the world over as the home of the immortal violin-makers Amati and Stradivari. Its industrious, peave-loving inhabitants have a depth of culture reflecting the age-old flowering of the Lombardy countryside. But Cremona is peaceful and contemplative no more. Under the regime of Roberto Farinacci, former secretary general of the Fascist Party and still the most powerful leader of the extreme wing of fascism, Cremona has become a city of fear.

When thousands of copies of the anti-fascist newspaper *Giustizia e Libertà* were secretly distributed and slogans were chalked up on walls at night reading, "Death to Mussolini!" "Death to Farinacci!" "Down with Fascism!" "We want bread for our children or Mussolini's head!" "Long live liberty! Long live Republican Spain!" Farinacci employed all the old ghastly methods of suppression, including, of course, the whipping post and castor oil. Finally, agents of the "Ovra," the Fascist secret police, were brought from Rome. Circular letters bearing the forged signature of a Cremonese political émigré who enjoys a reputation in the town as a former leader in the cause of socialism were addressed to all suspected persons, calling upon them to contribute to a secret fund in behalf of republican Spain. This ruse secured many victims, including a number of supposed Fascists. Some 150 citizens were arrested.

The first fatality in this police terrorism was the eighteen-year-old clerk Giuseppe Bosio, who was beaten so brutally that he died in the hospital the next day. A gang of Fascists swooped down on the shop of a certain Ernesto Carettini, broke the windows, and smashed to bits everything they could lay their hands on. Then they left a notice on the wall saying: "Woe to anyone who buys bread in this shop." On the walls of the slaughterhouse in Cremona inscriptions were discovered, written with a piece of coal, agitating against Mussolini and Farinacci. At once all the butchers and their apprentices were ordered to the police station and there forced to write the incriminating sentences in their own hand. Though none of the samples bore any resemblance to the writing on the wall, the occasion was used for giving floggings to several of the apprentices.

DALMO CARNEVALI

Berlin, October 1

Radio Censorship

Dear Sirs: I am now engaged in revising and bringing up to date a pamphlet I prepared for the American Civil Liberties Union in 1936, with the assistance of Lucien Zacharoff, on the subject of radio censorship. I should welcome any facts concerning actual recent instances of censorship on the air which readers of *The Nation* may have in their possession. Material should be sent me at 1359 Broadway, New York City.

MINNA F. KASSNER

New York, October 15

CONTRIBUTORS

ROBERT S. ALLEN is coauthor with Drew Pearson of the syndicated newspaper column Washington Merry-Go-Round.

LOUIS FISCHER is *The Nation's* correspondent in Spain.

ROBERT DELL, a European journalist of many years' standing, is the Manchester *Guardian's* correspondent in Geneva.

RAMON SENDER, Spanish poet and author of "Seven Red Sundays" and "Pro Patria," has fought with the Loyalist forces since the beginning of the Spanish civil war. His wife and brother were killed by the fascists.

MELVILLE J. HERSKOVITS, on leave from the Department of Anthropology of Northwestern University, is doing special research at the University of London.

EDA LOU WALTON, poet and critic, is associate professor of English at Washington Square College, New York University.

PAUL M. SWEEZY is instructor in economics at Harvard University and consulting economist to the National Resources Committee.

MAXWELL GEISMAR is a member of the English Department of Sarah Lawrence College.

W. J. GHENT is the author of "The Road to Oregon" and "The Early Far West."

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